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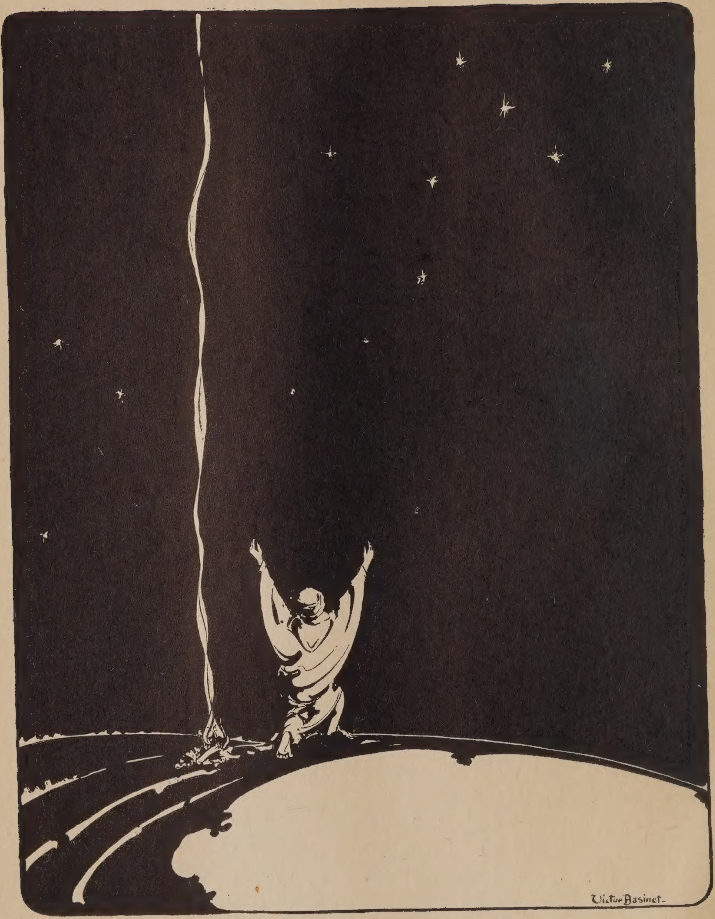
The autobiography of God

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF GOD

AN INTERPRETATION


Victor Basinet.

THE GOD NOBODY KNOWS

While man sees but little, he visions more.

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GOD

AN INTERPRETATION

BY
ERNEST R. TRATTNER
AUTHOR OF "UNRAVELLING THE BOOK OF BOOKS"

WITH DRAWINGS BY VICTOR BASINET

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
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FOREWORD

"God is His own interpreter
And He will make it plain."

When I had finished reading these lines from Cowper I was glad to close my book and walk out in the garden for a breath of fresh air. I was weary in body and soul and needed rest. Passing by our little brook, I came upon a patch of Shasta daisies arrayed in their immaculate bonnets of white bloom, and thinking of Linnæus I bowed my head in reverence.

It was already late in a sun-drenched afternoon—the clouds had begun to pile up fantastic pagodas in the sky. . . . There was a nip of mysticism in the air and I began to brood. . . . Is it possible—I asked myself—for one human being to make satisfyingly near and clear to another the reality of God?

Sleep did not come to me that evening—only a *Vision* disturbed by a supreme effort of just one soul to touch the hem of Infinity. There by my little brook I felt like Jacob wrestling at Jabbok. To-morrow would bring its victory and then I could ask for a blessing, with the assurance that there would be no refusal.

For myself I wished nothing, except strength to help my fellow men to a clearer "sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused." So many misconceptions of God have long become fixed in the mind of man that it is an undeniably pressing and paramount necessity to clarify our thinking. Besides, there has been (and for that matter, still is) a great deal of mockery. Some who had earnestly believed have recently lost the heritage of faith now pitilessly ground up and pulverized in those vast mechanical transformations that are sweeping man's little world. Others, again, if they do not dismiss God with a disdainful wave of the hand, regard Him as a superstition. Still others—perhaps the vast majority—have just become indifferent.

My observations on these matters, touching the profound unsettlement of belief that characterizes contemporary thinking, were not those of a solitary mind; they were amply confirmed by others. "The old scenery of faith has faded," writes Joseph Fort Newton, "and for not a few there is nothing to take its place. Some are smitten mute by a great awe, lest in trying to utter God they lose the Unutterable God, before whom silence is eloquence and wonder is worship. Others put the whole matter out of mind, so far as may be, taking refuge in a cynical indifference or a dim and blurred agnosticism. Still others are deeply troubled in mind, finding it difficult, if not impossible, to form any conception of God. The universe is so vast, life is often so baffling in its suffering and sorrow, its tragedy and cruelty, and the untoward happenings of the last ten years—dark, dreadful, and confused—have made the problem perplexingly acute for sensitive and reflective minds."*

With these words of Dr. Newton uppermost in my mind, I felt justified in my request. From time immemorial there has been such a woful misunderstanding of God, despite the vast amount of books that already choke the shelves of our libraries, that it seemed singularly good, especially in these days when men are welcoming a re-writing of knowledge, to know more of Him "who alone is permanently interesting."

As reverently as it was set forth, it was nevertheless a rather bold thought to suggest that God make available His own biography. Now that I have come to think of it more soberly, I can only say that I was lured by that strong but blindingly simple reality of a *Vision,* where anything like arrogance is utterly unknown. Caught in the grasp of a pure desire, I was conscious of no violation of the sanctities, but quite on the contrary, I felt an ecstasy like that of a child in the loving embrace of its parent whose living touch is upon all its limbs. "Thou would'st not seek

*Newton: *My Idea of God,* p. vi, Boston, 1927.

Me unless thou did'st possess Me," are the words that Pascal represents God as addressing to the human soul—and this I experienced in my *Vision*.

There has remained with me—undimmed these many years—that one request made to God beside the little brook. Only a *Vision!* . . . But visions have a curious way of defying all things; for it is here that the heart has its reasons that Reason does not know. . . .

With the slow passage of time I began to feel that divine gifts are also divine tasks and that my request to God simply awaited fulfilment at my own hands. From this there grew the unique assurance that if I were at once bold enough and humble enough to take pen in hand God would co-operate with me in every conceivable manner so that His biography could be set down here with forgivable anthropomorphism and in so easy and plain a style that no one on earth could possibly fail to profit thereby exceedingly much.

ERNEST R. TRATTNER.

January, 1930.

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BOOK I

COSMIC PERSPECTIVES

BOOK I

COSMIC PERSPECTIVES

THE GOD NOBODY KNOWS

To attempt biography where there is no Beginning and bring it to an end where no End is in sight is rather a uniquely venturesome task in the realm of letters. Flesh and blood has a distinct advantage over Me just here, for a human being can at least begin with his parents—if he does not choose to talk immediately about himself. . . .

Long before the modern era, ancient man—who already had inherited from primitive society a heavy traffic of supernatural ideas—assumed that he had arrived at a full knowledge of My ways. Believing himself in possession of an infallible revelation from Me, he concluded that inasmuch as he knew all things it was only natural to speak of My Divinity with the positive familiarity of a next-door neighbor. Of those countless paths that forever wind about the sum totality of the universe he was blissfully ignorant—and for that reason singularly free from profound and disturbing uncertainties.

But the boxlike world of antiquity, with its little mechanical system, proved to be nothing more than a figment of his imagination. Like the morning mist it has been dissolved, and in its place man, with wide-open eyes, suddenly beheld a solar system of which his earth is only an infinitesimal grain of sand on the seashore of infinity. With the old finalities gone, the new universe of illimitable infinities suddenly began to oppress him: was it not an unspeakable presumption that any human being should have claimed to fathom the unfathomable? Dissatisfied with his ability to compass My nature or attain to absolute knowledge of My essence, he has frequently arrived at pure negation—"a nameless Nothingness," as Suso called Me, "a *Not* of all the things that man can think or say."

. . . But an unknown God is one thing, and an unknowable God is quite another. (It is the *unknown* that always awaits man's recognition and gives to mortal life a curve of hope.) Set down in the midst of an infinite variety of existences it is by no means easy for man, who was only born but yesterday, to grasp the meaning of the heights beyond his own world. Often he is discouraged by his feeble comprehension and, like William Watson, he goes to a cemetery to undeceive himself:

I wandered far in the wold
  And after the heat and glare
I came at eve to a churchyard old:
  The yew-trees seemed at prayer.

And around me was dust in dust
  And the fleeting light, and Repose,
And the infinite pathos of human trust
  In a God whom no man knows.

To the emergent soul that has in some measure disentangled itself from mere appearances there stretches out the road of the wide prospect. While it sees but little, it *visions* more, until it comes to know that to man's deepest questionings there will be no complete solutions and no final answers, only this: an ever-increasing illumination.

With the deepening of experience, with the growing sense of the mystery of things that eludes all definition, there eventually comes a sure confidence in Me, beyond the limits of any formula in which theology has sought to resolve My unknowability:

> And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—
> Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.*

"FATHER, WHERE ART THOU?"

Despite his firm-rootedness in the vast unknown and un-understood forces of nature, man has frequently lost his upward wondering faith, in a wild and blundering despair.

One of the most poignant and bitter cries that was ever uttered by human lips came to My attention a little over a century ago. It was about that time that

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*D. G. Rossetti: Sonnet 37, "The Choice."

Jean Paul Richter gave vent to his lonesome feelings. "There is no God," sobbed Richter. "I have traversed the worlds, I have risen to the suns, I have passed athwart the great waste places of the sky. There is no God. I have descended to the place where the very shadow cast by Being dies out and ends. I have gazed into the gulf beyond and cried, 'Father, where art Thou?' But no answer came, save the sound of the storm which rages uncontrolled. We are orphans, you and I. Every soul in this great corpse-trench of the universe is utterly alone."

There have been—and, I suppose, there will continue to be for a long time to come—hosts of sincere men and women who will cherish a subtle resentment against Me, feeling perhaps that I ought, in some unmistakable self-disclosure or by some kind of assured revelation, answer the poignant cry of the human soul (especially when it is dipped in such stygian darkness and gloomy despair as befell Richter). It is indeed fanciful to picture Me violating My own laws in order to give a startling proof of My existence to all the forlorn men of earth. But —harsh as it may seem to some—that cannot be My ineluctable way. It would be just as reprehensible for Me to do this as it would be to change the mathematical table for a child perplexed by some difficult problem.

For man is organic to the world in which he lives and Life is an endless series of opportunities, to be experienced within this medium. But sometimes man becomes impatient and frequently loses sight of the fact that the use he makes of things depends on himself. Under such conditions he is apt either to think foolishly or act rashly. Of one who had committed suicide a kindly friend wrote these verses:

When he went blundering back to God,
  His song half written, his work half done,
Who knows what paths his bleeding feet trod,
  What hills of peace and pain he won?

I hope God smiled and took his hand,
  And said: "Poor truant, passionate fool!
Life's book is hard to understand;
  Why could'st thou not remain at school?"*

BUILDING THE UNIVERSE

I was a long time building the universe. In fact, it is not complete even now. Nor will it ever be. The average man—simply because he is still very ignorant—has little or no idea what a colossal growth of infinite processes this world really is. Some people even now think that the cosmos is nothing more than an accident, a jest of circumstances or a shifting phantasmagoria without meaning or purpose. They imagine that the sun and the moon and the stars joined hands with the vast myriads of planets and all came together by blind forces. Such a view re-

*Charles Hanson Towne: "Of One Self-Slain."

gards My universe as a mere happening or "an accidental concourse of atoms driven in chaotic whirlwinds of star-dust."

That the universe is not chance-produced has long been evident to a significant number of careful thinkers in all ages. Taking the case of a flower, Professor Bosanquet, the English philosopher, observes that "it is ridiculous to say that such a product arises by accident; that is, as a by-product of the interaction of elements in whose nature and general laws of combination no such result is immanent."* Equally well chosen is the less philosophical but no less accurate language of A. Maude Royden:

> If I see a picture like, for example, "The Last Supper" of Leonardo da Vinci, I cannot help believing that it is the product of a mind. If I read a play like Shakespeare's "Hamlet" it makes the same impression on me. I know not much about Leonardo and almost nothing about Shakespeare. I see also that the picture is defaced and faded—the play in parts incomprehensible. I, for that reason, cannot believe that the picture happened by chance, or that a number of children threw a box of paints on the wall and the resultant splashes formed what I now like for a picture. I cannot believe that a number of compositors flung type into the air and as it fell it happened to arrange itself into the lines that we call the play of "Hamlet." I believe that both play and picture were created by a mind. It is true that I cannot prove it, but I believe it.†

If it were supposed—just for argument's sake—

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*Bosanquet: *The Principle of Individuality and Value,* p. 147. Gifford Lectures for 1911–12.

†Royden: *I Believe in God,* p. 8, New York, 1927.

that chance alone brought about all things it would then be necessary to know how order and rationality could be educed from it, particularly that kind of order which may be anticipated and made the subject of calculation. For it cannot be rationally conceived that chaos heaped upon chaos could issue into a cosmos. It is, therefore, becoming increasingly evident to thoughtful men that I am not the author of any accidents, happy or unhappy; that the mechanism of the universe together with the fitting of life to the earth on which it rests is far from being a chance product; that there is no evidence in the stars above or on the earth beneath that anything exhibits itself as the result of a fortuitous clashing of atoms.

The universe in its broadest sense represents the aggregation of intelligence, energy and order that no chance could produce. At its very best, chance could only bring out possible variations in an order that already exists. "It takes a girl in our factory," once declared an American business man, "about two days to learn to put the seventeen parts of a meat-chopper together. It may be that these millions of worlds, each with its separate orbit, all balanced so wonderfully in space—it may be that they just happened; it may be that by a million years of jumbling together they finally arranged themselves. I don't know. I am merely a plain manufacturer of cutlery.

But this I do know; that you can shake the seventeen parts of a meat-chopper around in a wash-tub for the next seventeen billion years and you'll never make a meat-chopper."

Creation, backed as it is by the manifestation of orderly developments, makes it impossible to regard My universe as a causeless or lawless production. No fortuitous concourse of atoms, even with all eternity for them to clash in, could account for the complex arrangements that make up the retina of the human eye, nor could they explain the marvellous parts that form the web of a duck's foot.

MY YOUTH

Man is slowly beginning to realize that, despite the vast age of the world, all of Nature is eternally young and that in consequence of this majestic fact he who has the youthful spirit—no matter at what age—is *en rapport* with My creation.

It was while drinking the intoxicating sunshine of the Mediterranean lands that Sara Teasdale exclaimed:

> O when God made Italy He was gay and young . . .

I should like to have the larger truth known: that I was young and gay when I made the whole world. For all of creation is the work of youth. Nature, through which I am expressed, is never weary and never despondent, but always striving toward recovery and new life.

At no time have I been old or *blasé*. Those artists who have presented Me under the appearance of an old man have done a grave injustice to the radiant and immortal spirit of reality. It is really curious how mediæval ideas still cling. There is nothing more strange in modern art than that fresco in the Boston Public Library, where the painter, Mr. John S. Sargent, has attempted to portray Me in living colors as an aged man of ineffable dignity seated upon a huge throne. He has made My appearance gloomy and forbidding, a typical mediæval Jehovah. Like some familiar figure of the Dark Ages I look out of this canvas upon a strange new world moving below Me.

Such representations are better called "misrepresentations." They are all wrong. "Few passages in Scripture," declares the Reverend Harry Emerson Fosdick, "better deserve a preacher's attention than God's accusation against his people in the 50th Psalm: 'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself.' The universal applicability of this charge is evident to any one who knows the history of man's religious thought. If in the beginning God did make man in His own image, man has been busy ever since making God in his image, and the deplorable consequences are everywhere to be seen.

From idolaters, who bow down before wooden images of the divine in human form, to ourselves, praying to a magnified man throned somewhere in the skies, man has persistently run God into his own mold."*

It has been the habit of man to think of Me as like himself. So long as old age is regarded as more divine than youth just so long will I be pictured as an aged Jehovah. But creation is far from being old. For even now, after the passage of untold millions of years, everything in the vast structure of the universe bears the hallmark of vigor. Take, for example, these things: the freshness of the early morning, the pristine beauty of the flowers, the song of the skylark, the brightness of the evening star, the crystal purity of a mountain stream, the smile of a baby dimpling the earth with joy, or two lovers in passionate embrace—could old age create these buoyant realities?

Stoutly rebuking the traditional conception Mr. H. G. Wells speaks of Me in terms of vigorous youth:

> I know of no Christian attempt to represent or symbolize God the Father which is not a bearded, aged man. White hair, beard, bearing wrinkles, a hundred such symptoms of senile decay are there. These marks of senility do not astonish our modern minds in the picture of God, only because tradition and usage have blinded our eyes to the absurdity of a time-worn immortal. . . . But the God of this new age,

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*Fosdick: *Christianity and Progress,* p. 217, New York, 1925.

we repeat, looks not to our past but our future, and if a figure may represent Him it must be the figure of a beautiful youth, already brave and wise, but hardly come to his strength. He should stand lightly on his feet in the morning time, eager to go forward, as though he had but newly arisen to a day that was still but a promise. . . .*

It was with evident irony that a disgruntled mortal once said that youth is sure of all things, middle-age only a few, and old-age is sure only of death. Beyond its obvious pessimism, this comparison enunciates a vital truth: as I am sure of all things I must be Eternal Youth.

But what of death? Harsh as it may seem, still the law will hold good: until man learns the secret of Life he must undergo this transition. When his science becomes less infantile he will be eternally young in an eternally young world.

When that day arrives I will prepare a new chapter in My biography.

"SOME CALL IT EVOLUTION—"

An astonishing characteristic of My biography will doubtless be the large number of extracts culled from the writings of mortal man. There is a sweetness in human speech even though it be no more articulated than the lisp of a babe. But a beautiful thought well expressed is like a violin bow drawn across the resonant fibres of the heart. Rarely has any

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*Wells: *God the Invisible King,* p. 164, New York, 1927.

mind, pondering the mysteries of My universe, caught a deeper insight than William H. Carruth when he penned the following stanza:

> A fire-mist and a planet,
>   A crystal and a cell,
> A jelly-fish and a saurian,
>   And caves where cave-men dwell;
> Then a sense of law and beauty,
>   And a face turned from the clod—
> Some call it Evolution
>   And others call it God.

Men have so long thought in unscientific terms about the origin of the world that it becomes no easy matter for them to change their mental habits. For almost every race and almost every religion has produced its own classic report on cosmogony. When one compares the exalted ideas of Carruth with those extremely naïve accounts that abound in the records and folklore of primitive peoples it can easily be seen how far modern man has travelled beyond the rude knowledge of his ancestors. Endless hours could be spent in examining these early narratives which were handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. But they are all pretty much the same in their lack of methodical inquiry. It is undeniably true that they frequently contain flashes of genuine insight; but these are like feeble torches in the dark places of ignorance.

In all parts of the world men have fashioned their myths and legends attempting to explain creation in mechanical terms. An essential part of these older cosmogonies is the thought of the world being the product of carpenter's and joiner's skill accomplished within a given period of time. Accordingly, I am often pictured as a great master-mechanic far off in space who once for all constructed, out of hand or voice, this universe with its numberless wheels within wheels. Having endowed it with power—wound it up and set it going—I then rested from My labors precisely as a man might.

Now that scientists have popularized the subject of evolution in all its myriad phases, I trust no one will accuse Me of heresy against Myself when I say that the world was not created mechanically. Neither was it fashioned in six days (consequently I did not rest on the seventh). All these stories of creation, crude products of man's early thinking, are such as might be expected from infant peoples making the first tiny explorations of the infinite complexity of the universe.

But I have never rested on any day. Creation is in no sense a finished product: it is a growing organism, a continuous *act* (not an accomplished *fact*). The popular picture of Me existing detached from My universe in solitary bliss—happily static and statically happy—enjoying a perpetual state of perfection is altogether a fiction of man's own imagination. Far from being on the *outside* of the world process, modern Science has re-discovered Me very much on the *inside* of all things:

> The belief that God wound up the world in the beginning and set it running and that it has been running by itself ever since, except for a little regulating now and then, is rank materialism. We believe in God the Sustainer as well as God the Creator. We believe in the God of the present—not merely a God who did something once but a God who does everything now.*

Slowly and very gradually men are removing from My shoulders the tawdry trappings of regal pomp attached to a kingly artificer. As human knowledge widens, one sees a sure surrender of all those mechanical ideas that have so long clustered about man's vision of My activity. The universe is not a finished product and for that reason I sit upon no easy chair with folded hands, or upon a monarch's throne amid pomp and circumstance. On the very contrary, I am just as much at work fashioning My creation now as when I began at a time when there was no beginning.

I am ceaseless Activity.

CREATOR

People frequently speak of Me as *Creator*. There ought to be no objection to the use of this very ex-

*Slosson: *Sermons of a Chemist,* p. 88, New York, 1925.

pressive word, providing it is employed in a carefully guarded sense.

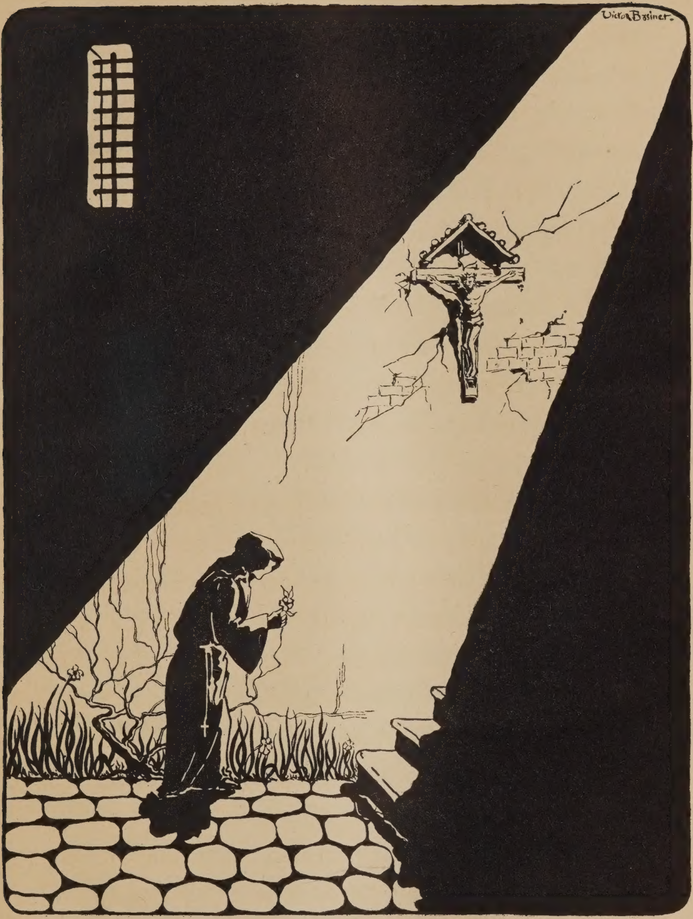
It will take civilization many centuries before the average man has weaned himself from the habit of picturing Me as a God who magically charmed things out of nothing. It will also take a long stretch of time before the mechanical conception of creation dies out, particularly that intensely popular but pestiferous notion which represents Me as having wound up and started the universal machinery as one winds up a mechanical toy and then tosses it off into space.

Instead of understanding My activity as inherent *in* nature, in whom men live and move and have their being, people have long held the absurd opinion that My world is only a machine, a machine directed by Me but detached from Me and that I bear the same relation to it as an engineer does to the locomotive he invented and now superintends. Such a view supposes Me to have been once upon a time intensely active during a period of just six days, but, having exhausted My creative power in six original efforts, to have been comparatively inactive ever since (except for a little needed adjustment and alteration such as any well-regulated machine requires from time to time).

Most opinions concerning My creativity seem to be based on analogies and they suffer in that one important particular. Nowhere is this inadequacy more evident than in the machine analogy, which borrows the idea of My universe existing detached from Me from those contrivances of human workmanship that can function without the aid of the original agency that manufactured them. If human skill—so it has been argued—can construct a machine which will act by laws and forces inherent in itself then why cannot Infinite Wisdom construct one which will do the same on an infinitely larger scale? It is true that man can make a machine but he does not make the laws nor does he create the forces by which it acts.

In view of the vast strides that scientific men have made in the last one hundred years it would be quite an intellectual throw-back to argue that I created the world as a watchman creates a watch. That was the famous analogy of William Paley, an English theologian of the nineteenth century. "When we look at the watch," wrote Paley in his *Natural Theology,* "we know that this instrument is the result, not of accident, but of deliberate design. The parts did not tumble together by chance; they were put together by a mind that knew exactly what it wanted to do."

In a large sense Paley's words are true and they would be altogether true *if* (and this "if" is the rub) I actually created the Universe as a watchmaker makes a watch, a separate, externally posited effect.


Victor Bossiner.

FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL

The universe was not made, but has grown. . . . It is not a machine at all, but an organism with an indwelling principle of life!

As a manufactured article a watch is fashioned by assembling various parts and co-ordinating them: that is man's method. My method, on the other hand, represents an altogether different process, for I manufacture nothing. What I create grows—that is to say, it evolves. In other words, everything that now is has come from something that existed before. "What we have in this universe," wrote John Fiske, "is not a machine at all, but an organism, with an indwelling principle of life. The universe was not made, but has grown." Consequently, "the last inch of ground is cut away from under the theologians who suppose the universe to have come into existence through a supernatural process of manufacture at the hands of a Creator outside of itself."*

If analogies about My creative activities must be used (and men seem as yet to have no escape from a helpless surrender to such inadequacies) then it is much better for intelligent people to discard Paley's analogy of the watch and use Tennyson's verses on the "Flower in the Crannied Wall," and for this reason: because My universe is something that has grown like a rose—an expression of evolution, a prodigious inner effort and an unceasing outreach. It is not a *something* created like a clock. . . .

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*Fiske: *The Idea of God,* pp. 131–133, Boston, 1885. Had Joyce Kilmer been familiar with the writings of Fiske, in all probability he would have said:

> Poems are *made* by fools like me,
> But only God can *grow* a tree!

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

FROM FINGERS TO VOICE

The question of the origin of things is nearly as old as man himself, for early in the childhood of the race there came the promptings of natural curiosity. Gazing upon the purple-tinted mountains that surrounded his dwelling, primitive man wondered—who piled up these stones against the sky? Who causes the sun to make his daily round across the heavens? Who is responsible for the procession of the stars at night and alters the size and shape of the moon?

To such native questionings man produced his own answers which he embodied in myth and legend. One of the very old Vedic Hymns (Rigveda X: 90) declares that I formed the world from the different members of the body of a giant. Rather widespread was the belief that at the beginning of things was chaos—a primeval era when matter was as yet dark, formless, and void. Out of this primordial matter it was thought that I had fashioned a kind of a vast world-egg over which I was naively pictured in a brooding mood. (At Elephantine in Egypt, it was believed that I had formed this egg from the mud of the Nile.) In the fulness of time this colossal world-egg hatched—that is, there was a cleft in the middle making it possible for the upper and concave half to rise and form the heavens, leaving the lower for the earth. . . . Frequently in these old cosmogonies creation is ascribed to sexual congress.

One of the very earliest ideas in popular vogue throughout the antique world was the belief that I created the visible universe with My hands and fingers. It was altogether natural for men in the childhood of their thinking to imagine Me rather like an enlarged human being. And so by analogy they did not hesitate to look upon the whole of creation as "the work of His fingers." As a potter moulds his clay I was pictured as having shaped all things and then launching forth the rolling planets into space.

In the earliest biblical account of My creative activity (as given in the second chapter of the book of Genesis) I am actually pictured as having taken a clod of earth in My hands, and in a very literal way, holding it close to My nostrils so as to breathe into it the breath of life:

> And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

As time went on and man made progress he evolved a nobler view. The idea of Me using My hands was considered entirely too gross by later generations. This can easily be seen in a comparison of the opening chapters in Genesis. About four hundred years separates the composition of the first chapter of Genesis from the earlier and more primitive second chapter, consequently, it is no wonder that the *First* chapter marks a striking advance over the *Second.* This first chapter—the work of Hebrew priests living in Babylonia—is for that reason more dignified. No longer is creation the product of My fingers—it is now ascribed to My voice:

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*Genesis 2 : 7.

> And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*

The Hebrews were not the only people of antiquity who made a transition from the crude idea of creation by fingers to the more impressive idea of creation by voice. Egyptian literature records a similar advance when it represented Me as the great god Thot, regarded by My worshippers as the Lord of the voice knowing the correct sounds, words, and gestures by which the cosmic forces are put in motion. Unlike the other gods who had to create by muscular effort, I, Thot, simply used sounds. Sometimes I am pictured as employing magical formulas full of gibberish but in all cases it was the articulate word that, on issuing from My lips, thickened into material substances. The far-reaching effect of this ancient Egyptian view may be seen in the doctrine of creation explained according to the system of an heretical sect called the Marcosians. A passage from their book of magic tells how the solar forms saluted Me:

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*Genesis 1 : 3.

> And speaking, the god clapped his hands and burst seven times into bursts of laughter. *Kha, Kha, Kha, Kha, Kha, Kha, Kha,* and when he had done laughing, seven gods were born, one for each burst of laughter as we see. When Hermes first laughed, light appeared, to light everything; and the Creation began to take place. He laughed six times in succession, and each burst of laughter gave birth to a fresh being and a fresh phenomenon; the earth, feeling the sound, in its turn gave utterance to a cry and bowed itself, and the waters were divided into three bodies. Then were born Destiny, Justice, Opportunity, the Soul. The last, at its birth, first laughed, then wept, whereupon the god gave forth a breath, bent himself towards the earth and produced the serpent Python, which is possessed of universal prescience. At the sight of the dragon, the god was struck with stupor, and clacked his lips, whereupon an armed being appeared. The god, seeing this, was again struck with stupor, as at sight of a more powerful one than himself, and lowering his eyes toward the earth, exclaimed, *Iao!* The god who is master of everything was born of the echo of that sound.*

While the educated Hebrews and Egyptians outgrew the idea that I created the universe with My hands, the mediæval world tenaciously clung to the older belief. Certain theologians like Gregory of

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*Maspero: "Creation by the Voice and the Ennead of Hermapolis," an article in the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, 1892, vol. III (new series), p. 367.

Nyssa and Augustine advocated a more spiritual understanding but they were loudly shouted down. So firmly did this notion grip the minds of Europe that in sculptures, mosaics and stained-glass windows men represented Me working with My hands creating and shaping the world. In one instance I am shown actually sewing together skins of animals to make clothes for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In the cathedral of Upsala one may still see the legend of creation carved in stone above the tomb of Linnæus, the famous Swedish naturalist of the eighteenth century. Here, in a broad succession of scenes, I am represented in the form of a human being achieving the various acts of creation by sheer physical exertion.

Man seeks to explain the cosmos: it is his unabandonable quest in which his own mind is endlessly and persistently creative. Each age, according to its own best lights, arrives at its favorite answer; and each answer, no matter how absurd (man alone is permitted the privilege of absurdity), is a part of that scaffolding of thought whereby he builds the cathedral of Knowledge.

THE STRANGE CASE OF PROFESSOR BERINGER

What cruel tenacity lies embedded in primitive ideas!

Instead of adhering to the more noble view of creation by voice, the majority of European thinkers preferred My fingers. And that is one reason in explanation of the attitude of the eighteenth-century theologians when they stoutly resisted the scientific data concerning fossils. To these men it was blasphemous to speak of fossils as the remains of animals who roamed the earth before modern species were evolved. To their pious way of thinking it was far more reverent to describe them as imperfect "models" made by Me before I had fully decided upon the best patterns.

It would be doing a grave injustice to the story of fossils were I to omit from this biography the famous case of Johann Beringer, who was a professor in the University of Wurzburg and occupied with distinction the office of private physician to the Prince-Bishop. In 1726 Prof. Beringer published a treatise with many "marvellous" illustrations.* Book-collectors have always paid a very high price for Beringer's work, and for this reason—because it was not only "for the greater glory of God" that Beringer came to believe in the finger-origin of fossils, but in time Beringer tried to suppress his own book.

It happened in this way. At Dr. Beringer's university there were some students who, being possessed with a sense of humor, were determined to

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*Beringer: *Lithographia Wirceburgensis Specimen Primum*, 1726. A copy of this book may be found in the White Library at Cornell University.

play a little trick on their credulous professor. Out of baked clay they prepared a glorious collection of sham fossils representing all kinds of animals and plants; they even went so far as to scratch Hebrew and Syriac inscriptions on them in order to give their prank an air of dim antiquity. These faked productions were buried by the students in a place where the learned professor was in the habit of searching for such divine specimens. Although they had only played a trick, the students were amazed at the genuine joy of Dr. Beringer on unearthing these indubitable proofs of My creation. Here were fossils buried with actual inscriptions indicating that I had purposely prepared them with My own fingers!

With that over-vaulting haste which comes from unbounded enthusiasm and ecstasy, Dr. Beringer wrote an elaborate book and with enormous zeal he prepared at a great cost twenty-two facsimile plates, to show the world the concrete evidences of his remarkable discoveries.

Long before the professor's book left the printer's shop the students were having their laugh. Wide and loud were the rumors exposing the fraud. But they did no good. For Dr. Beringer was of robust faith. Nothing could dissuade one possessed of such adamantine convictions, that I made the world other than with My fingers.

But at last the duped professor was convinced that he had been the victim of a joke. It is said that having been taunted by his rivals he died of shame—only, however, after he had spent his fortune in trying to buy up all those copies of the book he had expressed so much delight in seeing off the press.

Poor Dr. Beringer! I mention him here because he burnt his fingers in a sincere but foolish attempt to save Mine!

THE TWO VERSIONS OF GENESIS

So many contradictory ideas about Me and My creative activities have emanated from the first and second chapters of Genesis that I think a few words about them will be in good place.

It was not until the eighteenth century that men first began to learn that the book of Genesis is a huge compilatory document made up from different sources pieced together. As a result of many years of close investigation and profound research it is now known that the first chapter of Genesis was taken from the so-called Priestly Document, and the second chapter comes from the ancient Yahwistic Records. The ancient Hebrews dearly loved these old stories of creation and were determined to keep them close to each other despite their vast differences in theology and outlook. Like all oriental peoples the Hebrews were very tolerant of incongruities.*

*For a full discussion of the origin of the various documents and how they were woven together in the making of Genesis consult *The Literature of the Old Testament*, by Julius A. Bewer, New York, 1924.

A close examination of the differences between the first and second chapters of Genesis reveals the alternating names by which the Hebrews referred to Me. The first chapter uses exclusively the term *Elohim* (translated *God*). The second chapter employs the term *Yahweh* (translated *Jehovah* or *Lord*).

Besides this significant difference a number of other elements crop up to create an even clearer line of demarcation. The first account has a very precise form and dignified style, whereas the Yahweh-version of the second chapter is written in picturesque and flowing language. The writer's conception of Me in the First chapter is lofty and majestic, but in the Second I am much less spiritualized. Then again, in the First chapter it is said that man and woman were created by Me in one act; but in the Second chapter it is declared that I created man first and then, later, out of man's rib formed woman (as a kind of after-thought)!

But this is not all. The first account extends My creative activity through six days. During those first six days I am pictured calling into existence the various fundamentals of the cosmos: the sun, the moon, the stars, earth, ocean, plant life, animal life, and, finally, man and woman.

But the second account knows nothing of this six-day operation! It deliberately speaks of *"the day"* in which "the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. . . ." And here was a sore dilemma fixed between these two contradictory accounts lying next to each other within the same book.

"Which part of the Bible are we to believe?" asked the bewildered theologians. "Should we adhere to the First chapter of Genesis that explicitly says God created the world in six days?—or should we give our loyalty to the Second chapter that declares He did it in one?"

Let us see how it was answered.

SIX DAYS AND INSTANTANEOUS

Very early in the history of theological literature men began to reason among themselves just why I chose to extend My creative activity over a period of six days. Thus, for example, Philo of Alexandria declared that I created the world in this short period not because I stood in need of a given length of time —"for it is natural that God should do everything at once, not merely by uttering a command, but by even thinking of it"—but on account of an inherent necessity to *arrange* things. Now arrangement, according to Philo, involves a kinship with numbers:

> . . . and, of all numbers, six is by the laws of nature the most productive. For of all the numbers, from the unit upward, it is the first perfect one, being made equal to its parts, and being made complete by them; the number three

> being half of it, and the number two a third of it, and the unit a sixth of it, and, so to say, it is formed so as to be both male and female. Accordingly, of odd numbers the first is the number three, and of even numbers the first is two, and the two numbers multiplied together make six. It was fitting, therefore, that the world, being the most perfect of created things, should be made according to the perfect number, namely six . . .*

But it was unavoidable that the idea of the universe being an instantaneous product should also make its way among the early thinkers, not of course to the exclusion of the six-day theory but rather parallel to it. Even Philo, while explaining the mystery of the number six, could not escape the thought that had I desired to make everything at once, that too would have been possible "not merely by uttering a command but by even thinking of it." Therefore, to begin with, the idea of instantaneous creation seemed altogether reasonable. It had a grand air of philosophical speculation about it: are not all things possible with God? Moreover, there was the explicit statement contained in the Second chapter of Genesis which in turn was buttressed by a very strong proof-text from the Psalms: "He spoke, and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast."

Long and bitter were the quarrels on this great question among the theologians of ancient days. Finally, a reconciliation was arrived at in which the two divergent accounts were declared in harmony

*Philo: *On the Creation of the World* (Section II).

with each other—that is, it came to be believed that in some mysterious manner I created the universe in six days and at the same time brought it all into existence instantaneously. In its most classical dress this reconciliation was pronounced by St. Thomas Aquinas who eased the puzzling difficulties by saying that I created the substance of all things in a moment yet it took Me a full six days to arrange, shape, separate and polish up My adoring creation.*

NO BEGINNING

With no adequate idea of the organic relationship of the universe to My being, the theologians of all ages have continued to view Me as an originally self-centred Person who, at a certain assignable date in the past, called the world into existence. Because man himself is a maker of things—and the things that he makes are distinct from himself—he reasoned, by a rather crude analogy, that as an architect would commence the construction of an edifice at an "assignable date" so I started the universe at a particular time.

Because he is strongly romantic, man tends to dramatize Me. His favorite categories are personal. Is a chair or a table distinct from its maker, a finished product of causative force? Then a *Cause* of

*Aquinas: *Summa Theologica:* Question LXXIV—"On the Seven Days in Common."

all things must be equally distinct from His handiwork. So mechanical was this conception of Me as distinct from My universe that men came to believe that if the universe had never been formed, I, as a self-existent God, would have been in no way affected. "Creation commences," writes Paul Janet in the spirit of the old naïve anthropomorphism, "when God comes out of Himself, and thinks something else than Himself."* Thus, pictured as dwelling detached from the universe, it was further reasoned, along these same lines, that I was free to create or not to create, just as I was free at any moment to withdraw My sustaining power (in which contingency the universe would sink to nothingness).

So completely did this view of a "beginning" capture the minds of men that everywhere throughout the Middle Ages attempts were made to arrive at the correct day and hour upon which I summoned the universe into operation. The first day of the month of Tishri was considered by the best authorities among the rabbis as the true date, although some held to the first day of Nisan. As late as the seventeenth century, Dr. John Lightfoot, vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge, declared, out of his profound studies of Scripture, that the world was really created at equinox on the twelfth of September, four thousand years before Christ; that six days

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*Janet: *Final Causes*, p. 408. English translation, New York, 1844.

after that, Adam was created, at about nine o'clock in the morning; that he fell at about noon; that Christ was promised at about three o'clock in the afternoon.*

Now, the world as created in time presupposes some exciting cause for Me to have called it into existence. Men have not hesitated to labor their brains to find a reason. Some have said it was a matter of pure necessity, while others, like Plato, declared that inasmuch as I am free from jealousy I created the universe because I desired that all things should be as nearly like Myself as possible. Most theologians, following St. Thomas Aquinas, developed the notion that I created the universe simply for My own glory.

In a quaint old sermon John Lightfoot, who busied himself with these matters, explained the nature of My glory. Using the language of contemporary religion which delighted to picture Me in need of self-glorification and display (as a despot feeding on servile adulations) Lightfoot sermonized as follows:

> All terminates and centres in that great end,—His own glory. He created the world, to glorify His power; gave being to creatures, that He might glorify His own being; shows goodness to them, that He may glorify His own goodness, and receive glorifying from them: and at last, will destroy the world, to glorify His power and justice; damn the wicked, to glorify His truth and justice; and glorify His saints, to glorify

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*Lightfoot: *Works*, vol. VII, p. 372 f. (Pitman edition), London, 1822.

> His grace. So that God made all things for Himself, that is, for His own glory: doth all things for His own glory; created thee, me, and all flesh, that He might reap glory from us.*

Having long been pictured as a solitary (somewhat outlined) ante-mundane Person, existing somewhere off in space, it was only natural for the question to suggest itself: what was I doing before I created the world—that is, before I woke up and concluded to make something else to exist besides Myself. Of course such a question was considered by the theologians as utterly profane. Not being able to give an intelligent answer, the only thing they could do to silence the inquirer was to repeat St. Augustine's story about a good old man who, when some one pertly asked what I did before the world was created, replied: "He made a Hell for the inquisitive."

No longer is the modern theologian moved by the conceits of his forefathers in presuming to know the chief reason for creation. No longer does he believe in the necessity of a beginning; neither will he consent to waste his time trying to figure out the nature of "pure being," or how I was wrapped up in Myself before creating the cosmos. He also refuses to lend his talents in an effort to know when, how, or why I came to unwrap Myself. "All speculation concerning God as He would be in Himself apart from the

**Op. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 372.

world is vain; vain also the assumption that He would be the same apart from the world," declares a representative theological scholar of the modern school.*

In the past only a few careful thinkers have really understood the nature of My organic relationship to the universe. To-day their knowledge is being spread far and wide. This, of course, creates a new interest in this aspect of My biography. They have rightly insisted that no beginning need be imagined, for the universe is coëval with Me, eternal as I am eternal, without a beginning even as I have no origin in time. Spinoza expressed himself on this point substantially as Hegel did, when he declared that I am not more necessary to the world than the world is necessary to Me. "God," says Hegel, "is the Creator of the world; it belongs to His being, His essence, to the Creator; in so far as He is not this, He is imperfectly conceived"† (*ohne Welt ist Gott nicht Gott*).

There is no justification in supposing that My existence was at any time detached from the universe or that I was wrapped up in Myself as a Grand Absolute. Men have learnt from Hegel that to think of an Absolute without any kind of relationship or determination is to think simply of pure Being—which is not distinguishable from pure nonentity. "In truth," declared the philosopher Hermann Ulrici,

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*Beckwith: *The Idea of God*, p. 122, New York, 1922.
†Hegel: *Werke*, vol. XII, p. 157, 1832.

"God is not *first* God and then creator of the world, but *as* God he is creator of the world, and only *as* creator of the world is he God. To separate the two ideas from one another is an empty and arbitrary abstraction, affirming in God an unmeaning difference which contradicts the unity of the divine nature."*

BENEATH MY DIGNITY

Of all the curious speculations that have engaged the attention of men perhaps none is more bizarre than the thought of the material world as a creation unworthy of Me. Entangled in the philosophical implications of the problem of evil, various sects made it a matter of prime importance to declare that inasmuch as the universe contains evil it must certainly have been beneath My dignity to fashion a world like this.

In their philosophies men have long discoursed on dualism as an attempt to understand all things in terms of two cosmic powers, Good and Bad, at variance with each other. This division of Nature into rival forces goes back to the thinking of primitive man. But in its organized form it was proclaimed a religious gospel in ancient Iran by Zoroaster. To this early teacher all Life was a matter of stern contrasts, a vast battleground with Myself (Ahura Mazda) on the one side, as the principle of Good,

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*Quoted in Pringle-Pattison's Gifford Lectures: *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy*, p. 305, Oxford University, 1920.

and the Lie Demon (Angra Mainyu) on the other, as the principle of Evil.

From this far-away oriental home, dualistic ideas wandered into the Græco-Roman world where they were caught up in the contemporary philosophies and religions and often embroidered beyond recognition. Any wide-awake citizen living around the Mediterranean during the first or second century could not escape hearing a great deal about Gnosticism—a many-sided movement half religious, half philosophical—which undertook the task of making dualism popular.

Because the Gnostics (they who believed in Gnosticism) were regarded as heretics by orthodox Christians their books were burned and mercilessly destroyed. Only by carefully piecing together fragments of their ideas, now from one source and now from another, have modern scholars been able to understand the wide significance of this early rival of Christianity.

The Gnostics began with the assumption that the material world is evil. This was not a side issue with them but a fundamental tenet in which they condemned matter as essentially and irremediably bad. Desiring to shield Me from complicity in the introduction of evil into the world, they pictured Me as something very remote, detached from the universe, self-contained, an unfathomable abyss locked up within Myself. To such a far-off Primal Being the creation of a world in which there existed evil was an unthinkable thing. For Me, as a Supreme God, to stoop down to matter was considered very undignified. Consequently the origin of the world was assigned to another agency.

Who then brought the universe into existence?

The Gnostics answered this question by saying that what I could not do directly I could do by and through another. Calling to My aid a subordinate power, a kind of junior God, I commissioned him to do that which I felt it was beneath My dignity to do Myself. This would save Me from contamination. (For all matter is evil.)

This junior the Gnostics called the Demiurge. They taught that he proceeded from Me as an emanation and therefore carried the spiritual principle to earth, where it was allowed to be commingled with matter. As for the present order of things with its mixture of good and evil, this demigod was supposed to have been solely responsible for it.

Strongly influenced by this Gnostic conception of an intermediary power, the Alexandrian philosopher Philo Judæus worked up an elaborate treatise in which he essayed a reconciliation between Greek speculation and his own Hebraic faith. Calling the demiurge the "Logos" and purging its activities of those gross pagan notions that had long clustered around the central idea, he was able to win for his system an exceptionally wide approval. Although Philo's fellow Jews did not heartily espouse his ideas they were bequeathed to the Christians. By the time the author of the Fourth Gospel came to write his introduction, the Logos idea (identified with Christ) was already an acceptable thought in the circles of Christian Gnosticism. To the philosophically-minded Christians it was not enough to believe in Christ as the agency for salvation. It became equally necessary to link him with the idea of creation and assign a definite rôle to his activity. "In the beginning," writes St. John, "was the Logos and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made . . ."

By using the Logos idea John was able to overcome the unbridgeable antithesis between Myself and the mundane creation. In common with the other thinkers of that far-off age he had a passion for holiness that separated Me by a measureless abyss from the world of matter. Yet the Logos (frequently translated "The Word") coming directly from Me as an emanation was identified with the eternal Christ. In that way Christianity made use of a Gnostic thought without indulging too grossly in the caricatures of cloud-built speculations.

To be sure there were plenty of Gnostics in the churches who were not content with a single Demiurge. They constructed fantastic schemes of descending ladders between Me and the world, ladders of divine emanations in which My power was "stepped down" by celestial agents each in scale a little less divine until the material world was finally reached.

According to Valentinus, who was one of the foremost Gnostic thinkers, these emanations were in pairs with sexual polarity. Others again who did not follow Valentinus engaged in a wild play of sacred numbers, while still others, apparently more audacious than their fellows but perhaps with a better sense of humor, went so far as to say that the world was really made by the devil at a moment when I was not looking!

While it has no particular bearing on the function of the Demiurge (except to point an alluring contrast) it is interesting to note that Gnosticism's high and holy conception of Me as detached from the universe and far off from any act of creation is frequently challenged by modern writers who delight themselves in entertaining quite opposite notions. "It seemed to him," declared St. John Ervine speaking of the central character in *Changing Winds,* "it seemed to him that God was not a Being who miraculously made the world, but a Being who labored at it, suffered and failed, and rose again and achieved

. . . He could hear God, stumbling through the Universe, full of the agony of desire, calling continually, "Let there be light! Let there be light! . . ."

From St. John of the Gospels to St. John Ervine is a wide space of many centuries but one does not need to go outside the antique world to pick up a curious collection of speculations.

Shortly after the Fourth Gospel had been finished a new heresy arose in the city of Rome that came near wrecking the early Christian church. A wealthy ship-builder by the name of Marcion, long influenced by Gnostic speculations, launched the idea that this evil and wicked world was really the work of the Jewish God and that Jesus Christ is My enemy. "Finding in Christ, as it were, another disposition of simple and pure benignity, a disposition unlike that of the Creator, Marcion easily argued that in his Christ was revealed a new and strange divinity."*

Moved by an intolerant passion against everything of a Hebraic origin, Marcion rejected the Old Testament completely and tore out of the epistles of St. Paul whatever favorable references he found regarding Jewish religious ideas. As far as he could see, the Jewish God and the Christian God had nothing in common. As the Jewish God is responsible for all evil, so the Christian God is for all the good. For the Christian God has nothing to do with the world of

*Tertullian: *Against Marcion*, book I, chap. 2.

things, he neither created nor does he control the physical universe.

Despite his strong propaganda and his large following, the leading thinkers of the Church took Marcion's ideas in hand. After a long battle bitterly fought on both sides the ship-builder's organization was destroyed and everything connected with it was sunk to the bottom of the dark sea of heresy.

The theologians of the day were not content to declare Marcion's denial of divine creation a heresy: in order to safeguard the Church they made it an essential part of her permanent teaching to assert the very opposite point of view, so that no loyal Christians need ever be misled by false doctrine. In framing the one œcumenical symbol of Christianity—the Nicene Creed—they were anxious to declare that it was not beneath My dignity to create the universe: that is why the creed begins with the words "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible."

A LIVING UNIVERSE

With the elimination of the Demiurge and the wholesome insistence that it was decidedly not beneath My dignity to create a material universe, there remained just one more cosmic problem of major importance to engage the attention of the theologians: Did I create the world out of nothing (*ex ni-*

hilo) or was it formed out of pre-existing materials?

To the Greek way of thinking it seemed unreasonable that something could come out of nothing. Whatever arguments were used by the Hellenic philosophers were directed to show that matter far from being magically charmed into existence by a mere fiat is eternal as I am eternal. But to the Jewish mind, and subsequently to the Christian, this view was held in condemnation, for it seemed to impose upon Me a serious limitation.

One of the very earliest controversies on this subject began in a discussion led by Hermogenes, whose presentation of the doctrine of the eternity of matter was hotly challenged by Tertullian, a renowned Church Father of the second century. Tertullian's main argument in favor of creation *ex nihilo* ran something like this: If matter were eternal it would be equal to God, for eternity is the essential quality of deity. Thus there would be two gods instead of one. Furthermore, if matter had no beginning it will have no end. "Besides," argued Tertullian, "the belief that everything was made from nothing will be impressed upon us by that ultimate dispensation of God which will bring back all things to nothing. For the very heaven shall be rolled together as a scroll; nay, it shall come to nothing along with the earth itself with which it was made in the beginning."*

*Tertullian: *Against Hermogenes*, chap. 34.

With the progress of intellectual thought after the Dark Ages something of genuine value in the old Greek idea again took hold. While the leaders of both church and synagogue were content to rest on the doctrine of *ex nihilo,* John Scotus Erigena was getting acquainted with Neo-Platonic conceptions. These he tried to apply to the biblical account of creation, which resulted in a pantheistic view. Erigena believed in an all-including unity and from such vantage ground argued that I created the world not out of nothing but out of My own essence. Crude as his thinking was in several aspects, still it embodied far more reason than the views of the Westminster Confession, which merely restated the old theological doctrine that "It pleased God in the beginning to make or create out of nothing the world and all things therein in the space of six days."

From the middle of the nineteenth century the evolutionary point of view has made possible a greater appreciation of the organic nature of the universe. Men now have at their command a body of scientific facts upon which they can base their philosophy with far more assurance and confidence that they are nearer to the truth. Many of the old questions that long distressed theologians have fallen by the wayside, not because they have been argued down or disproven but because, in the face of the newer knowledge, they are utterly irrelevant. No structure can stand—particularly a theological structure—if the rock on which it is built is reduced to a heap of dust. If its axioms have died it is a waste of time to resurrect the conclusions which follow them.

Out of a chaos of loose and fantastic ideas, ideas made obscure by explanations still more obscure, there has slowly arisen a more orderly knowledge. Through this knowledge modern man rightly feels that he is fronting a new universe, one which did not have to be created out of nothing, whose substance is eternal to Me as I am to it. "If creation means anything," declared Professor James Ward, in a strong emphasis upon this modern conception, "it means something so far involved in the divine essence that we are entitled to say, as Hegel was fond of saying, 'without the world God is not God.' "*

It will take a long time before the partial insights of man's thinking are brought to maturity. But there is already a fine understanding that the material world does not need to be condemned by a theological doctrine that would decry its worth in order to exalt My glory. The denunciation of the universe as wholly evil and made up of dead matter belongs to an order of thought that modern knowledge has entirely outgrown. Matter, far from being dead, thrills with life. The universe is a living universe, ever evolving, always reaching out toward the beyond. . . .

This newer point of view is a recent achievement; for modern physics has reduced all matter to the im-

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*Ward: *Realm of Ends*, p. 233. Gifford Lectures for 1907–10.

material manifestation of energy (which of course destroys the old materialism). The once solid atom has been disintegrated into electrons and protons. Physicists no longer believe in little particles of inert stuff bounding off each other on impact. Matter is now conceived as dynamic. "I think of the universe," declares Rufus Jones, "not as a dull, dead, mechanical thing, but rather when it is viewed in its deepest nature, as something spiritual. This does not mean that matter can be reduced to spirit. It is too soon to talk with assurance about the nature of matter. Nobody knows what it will turn out to be, and consequently we must wait for more light."*

Thus modern science with its immense amount of exploration has compelled man to think of the universe not in terms of fixed forms or inert stuff, rigid and static, but in terms of energy, moving and creative.

With what intelligence a few philosophers have acquired on their kindergarten earth, they are beginning to understand that creation was not the act of an Almighty Tyrant or a superannuated Deity. Neither was it the first rude experiment of some infant God who afterward abandoned it, ashamed of a lame performance. Nor was it the work of some Demiurge at which his superior scoffed.

All such views were intended to isolate Me drastically from My works.

My Idea of God (edited by J. Fort Newton), p. 53, Boston, 1927.

Sometimes men feared to belittle Me if they thought of My activity as completely absorbed in the universe.

But a universe infinite in space and time is a field broad enough for infinite Wisdom. The one eternal process is inexhaustible, it is not self-enclosed but creative, ascendant. And all reality is included in it. "However deep we push our inquiry into the nature of our world," wrote Professor Clarence Beckwith to his fellow mortals, "we are never able to pass beyond energy into a substratum of inactive and changeless Being. Everywhere is action, movement, freedom—a dynamic universe. This changed point of view compels momentous changes in the conception of God. It necessitates a different meaning to creation and providence, but also to the very nature of God. If God has anything to do with the creation of the world and with control in it, then he must be the kind of Reality which answers to the world as we know it."*

In My throbbing world it is as impossible for a man to live apart from the universal life as it is for a sand castle to shut out the sea. When the pessimist said: "I really believe that I could make a better world myself," the optimist replied, "Right! That's what we are here for. Now let us get to work and do it."

*Beckwith: *The Idea of God*, p. 23, New York, 1922.

BOOK II

HOW MEN BEGAN TO THINK OF ME

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On the whole the average person has been a very poor godmaker. His lively but unenlightened imagination has produced a rather curious medley of vagaries. Primitive man, because he knew but little history, did not live long enough to witness the incompetency and decay of his deities. Like a child playing with an empty-faced doll, he simply hugged his idol.

It is rather a confused story to trace in detail the origin of man's earliest attempts intelligently to understand Me. Through protracted and roundabout ways he began slowly to grasp the idea of the Infinite. By the time he came to the stage of belief popularly called "animism" the savage had already undergone a long and intricate mental evolution. To the primitive mind, the universe was strangely alive with spirits animating everything. Rivers and lakes, trees and stones, animals and plants, mountains and valleys were the dwelling places of the ghosts. The world of the savage man, small as it was, was nevertheless densely populated by invisible spirits hovering in and about every visible object. Sometimes the spirits were good, but very frequently they were hideously evil.

It is at this stage of culture—sometimes called polydæmonism—that fetichism flourished. The term comes from the Portuguese *feitico,* having been applied by Portuguese sailors to those relics and charms worn by the natives of West Africa. Now a fetich was anything whatever that impressed the savage with its supernatural powers. Any curious or conspicuous object—it made no difference what it was, a queer rock, a parrot's feathers or a bead—became a fetich. And because it was supposed to be the residence of a dæmon or spirit closely associated with Me it was worshipped and held sacred.

Stones, for example, have been widely worshipped. Fascinated by their odd-looking shape or remarkable size or color early man bowed down and adored them—not, of course, the stone but the spirit inside it from whom he felt he could legitimately ask for some good influence or kindly help. When once the idea of the sacredness of stones had become firmly fixed in the savage mind, it was natural enough that other stones, resembling those which were already recognized as gods, should be regarded as themselves divine, or as containing an indwelling ghost or deity. In Samoa, for example, smooth stones, apparently picked up out of the bed of the river, were regarded as representatives of certain gods, and wherever the stone was, there the god was supposed to be. One resembling a fish would be prayed to as the fisherman's god. Another, resembling a yam, would be the yam god. A third, round like a breadfruit, the breadfruit god—and so on.

Particularly those stones that came blazing out of the far-distant skies impressed man as singularly divine. Meteorites have been held sacred in many countries because they were believed to have come straight from heaven. An ugly aerolite—a venerated stone of early barbaric times—was worshipped by the Ephesians in their beautiful Temple of Diana. The Romans in 204 B. C. brought the stone of Cybele to their city in order to ward off an attack by Hannibal. Near Chicomoztoc (the seven caves) a huge meteor was worshipped by the ancient Mexicans as the son of the god and goddess Ometeuetli and Omecihuatl. Perhaps the most famous of all stones is the celebrated "Black Stone" at the Kaaba in Mecca, which was sacred to the Arabians centuries before the advent of Mohammed. Modern Mohammedans still kiss it in adoration just as their pagan ancestors did thousands of years ago. And the old tradition still lingers on in modern Islam that at first it shone brightly but in anger I turned it black on account of the sins of mankind.

A new day dawned upon man's eternal quest when he began to humanize his spirits. For countless centuries his ancestors held to the notion of indefinite ghosts—an expression of the indefiniteness and miscellaneous nature of his outlook. With the advancement of time all this underwent a profound transformation. "Indeed," writes F. B. Jevons, "the process which constitutes the change from polydæmonism to polytheism consists in the process, or rather is the process, by which the spirits, the personal beings, worshipped in tree, or sky, or cloud, or wind, or fire came gradually to be anthropomorphized—to be invested with human parts and passions and to be addressed like human beings with proper names."*

Out of all this transition there came by slow and imperceptible degrees the moralization of the gods. It is precisely at this point—namely, the fusion of morality with religion—that man began dimly to sense an altogether new and unheard-of chapter of My biography—an insight that has been by far and away the most significant element in civilization.

Of course, man has never been able to attribute to Me a higher morality than that which he himself possessed or evaluated. For that reason he still justifies his cruelties in My name.

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*Jevons: *The Idea of God in Primitive Religions*, p. 18, Cambridge, 1913.

"WHEN HALF-GODS GO"

Out of this raw material of animism, fetichism, and polydæmonism religion slowly—very slowly—developed. It is therefore not at all surprising that even in the most advanced modern religions many originally fetichistic notions about Me have survived; for primitive ideas die hard—very hard. . . .

Another aspect of animism is totemism. Primitive clans formed a blood-relation with the spirit resident in the animals of a certain species. It became a covenant, the animals so designated being treated kindly. On certain occasions, however, one of them was killed and eaten by the whole clan. In this way it was supposed that the life of the spirit within the beast (now become the god) might pass into the very bodies of his worshippers, thus insuring friendly relations. In time the heap of stones upon which the animal's blood was poured became an altar which eventually required a temple and a priest, so that the revolting scramble for the divine flesh was turned into a sacrificial feast of communion. . . .

Centuries passed. Already polydæmonism had evolved an indefinite plurality of spirit powers. But with the rise of polytheism—for that is the next stage in man's religious evolution—certain groups of these strange and weird powers were crystallized into one definite deity. When clans made permanent unions with other clans it was usually a concrete deity that was added and not just simply a hazy indefinite number of spirits. In this way the god or gods of one clan joined with the gods of their neighbors. Frequently these unions were brought about by war—the god of the victorious clan being automatically regarded by the vanquished people as superior to their own defeated deity. However, in cases like this, the worship of the defeated god did not cease, even though he had not been able to deliver them out of the hands of their enemy. Thus there came to be more than one god in a given territory until in the end, as in Babylonia, there was a pantheon with one great god supreme over the others.

Once man hit upon the idea of many gods, he carried the thought as far as his mind could stretch it until its manifold confusions, like the Tower of Babel, became hopelessly entangled. Polytheism had a god for every aspect of nature and every imaginable occupation of men.

Despite centuries of progress, polytheism is not altogether dead. It exists to-day in a pale and washed-out form even in certain phases of modern Christianity. Originally, Christianity started out as a formidable enemy to the "godless multitude of gods"—in the end, however, she compromised by embracing them. "The old gods, ousted by Jesus," writes one of England's most thoughtful Christian scholars, "have crept back, and have, so to speak, dug themselves in once more. Their temples being destroyed and their altars forsaken, they have come to church; and there you may find them to-day, receiving, under other names, the worship denied them in their own immemorial forms. Drastic measures are needed to rescue the sublime figure of our Lord from the press of this motley company, and to relieve the original doctrine from the stranglehold of a theology and a habit of religious thought which are to be traced to primitive paganism. The old gods have come to church; and, their presence beginning at long last to be detected, the day will soon arrive when either they or the congregation must leave."*

Like the ancient Brahman priests the Fathers of the Church were somewhat opportunistic: what they could not successfully oppose they absorbed into their system and turned to their advantage:

> In order to win the more readily the many pagans who still were to be found and to make itself less forbidding to the elite and the cultured in the cities and at court, the church lowered its standards, and suffered immeasurably in its inner spirit and life. Its opposition to the loose living which prevailed everywhere was not so genuine, and the admission of pagan practices and rites into the church contaminated the purity of its testimony. Thus saint and image-worship took the place of the old polytheism and

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*Weigall: *The Paganism in Our Christianity*, p. 19, London, 1928. Weigall's book is a bit harsh on contemporary Christianity, but as long as man persists in remaining in his embryonic condition there will be the need of a wise obstetrical function of criticism.

idolatry, and various masses which arose had a most suspicious likeness to old heathen ceremonies. The church had conquered the world in outward conquest, but the world had infected the church with its pagan spirit.*

With the fading out of polytheism and its many intermediary beliefs, men eventually come to monotheism. With the growth of knowledge all the idols dwindle in number. From the *many* of the Greeks to the *One* of the Hebrews there is a vast shrinkage! As man progresses out of the apparently inextricable tangle of polytheism he sets in motion certain forces that cause a high mortality rate among the deities.

The more knowledge the less gods.

ANTHROPOMORPHIC IDEAS

It has ever been the habit of man to think of Me in terms of himself—a habit that led the philosopher Spinoza to observe that if a triangle could speak it would say that God is eminently triangular, and if a circle could equally express itself it would hail the Divine as eminently circular—"And thus would every one ascribe his own attributes to God."

So long as man cared primarily for the things that satisfied the body he pictured Me from this same point of view. "How the pot has called the kettle black!"

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*Soper: *The Religions of Mankind*, p. 323, Cincinnati, 1921. Dr. Soper's words are equally applicable to Buddhism, which started out independent of the Hindu gods but eventually not only reinstated the old deities but added Gautama and many other Buddhas as objects of worship.

> Man has read his vanities into God, until he has supposed that singing anthems to God's praise might flatter Him as it would flatter us. Man has read his cruelties into God, and what in moments of vindictiveness and wrath we would like to do to our enemies we have supposed Eternal God would do to His. Man has read his religious partisanship into God; He who holds Orion and the Pleiades in His leash, the Almighty and Everlasting God, before Whom in the beginning the morning stars sang together, has been conceived as though He were a Baptist or a Methodist, a Presbyterian or an Anglican. Man has read his racial pride into God; nations have thought themselves His chosen people above all His other children because they seemed so to themselves. The centuries are sick with a god made in man's image. . . .*

At the present rate of progress it will take several more centuries of hard effort to educate the races of mankind out of the anthropomorphic habit, for men are desperately wedded to antiquated notions in face of obvious facts to the contrary. Like Voliva, who recently took a trip around the world and returned to Zion City, Illinois, only to report that his journey was in itself conclusive proof that the earth is not round, so men hang on to the nightmares of a thousand crumbling conceptions, fearing broad daylight.

Against all progress, it is sadly contended by many sincere folk that the uprooting of traditional ideas about Me—even though they be flagrant errors—is fraught with grave danger. Such an unsettlement is very often viewed as an alarming experience that might lead to atheism. It is needless to stress the fact

*Fosdick: *Christianity and Progress*, pp. 220–21, New York, 1922.

that history bears no warrant for such an assumption. Wherever men have been rigidly committed to anthropomorphic ideas about Me they have preserved a crude chapter of My biography and where they have been willing to advance, newer unfoldments inevitably stretched out before them. It is only when the average person projects his own egotism to a point where his idea of Me is nothing more than "man's shadow hailed divine" that his more intelligent neighbors cry out: "There is no God." They are quite right; there is no *such* God.

Like many people in every generation the ancient monk Serapion believed that I had a definite corporeal body, human in form, though infinitely larger and more beautiful than man's. Serapion's friends, to whom this anthropomorphic idea was utterly repugnant, graciously undertook to convince him that Divinity is spirit and has no body. When, after long argument, Serapion found that his views were shattered it is said that he threw himself on the ground and wept bitterly, because they had taken away his God and left him no one to pray to.

How utterly different from Serapion is the mood of the modern theologian! He recognizes that idolatry is not confined to the mere worshipping of images but that it may just as easily be an acquiescence in any inadequate idea of My nature. "And for idolatries there is only one cure," writes Dr. A. A.

David; and that is: "to lift the eyes to the highest concept of God possible to every generation in its day. In the growing man this concept must grow with the increase of his knowledge and experience of God's world."

"As wider skies broke on his view,
  God greatened in his growing mind;
Each year he dreamed his God anew,
  And left his older God behind.

He saw the boundless scheme dilate
  In star and blossom, sky and clod;
And, as the universe grew great
  He dreamed for it a greater God."*

IDOLS—MANKIND'S FIRST EDITIONS OF ME

The German philosopher Fichte once said that every conception man has of Me is necessarily an idol. From time immemorial people have believed in something but not necessarily in the real Me. To be sure, even idols have stood as representations of something real, and these have served as concrete symbols of My Reality. Yet, it would certainly be doing Me a grave injustice for any intelligent person to believe that the old capricious Yahweh of the Hebrews, or Jupiter of the Romans, or Zeus of the Greeks, or Ahura Mazda of the Persians, represented

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*David: "Energy Human and Divine" (a paper in *God in the Modern World*), p. 20, New York, 1929.

anything more than a very crude and semi-barbaric approach to truth.

Many of the large museums now contain idol exhibits assembled from the finds dug up in all parts of the world by enterprising archæologists. As repulsive as most of these representations are, they compare very favorably with those hideous idols that man cannot see with his naked eye. These mental images are just as numerous as the material ones and—one ought not to hesitate to say—equally false and ugly. The human mind is always constructing certain mental idols: myths, metaphors, concepts, and a host of impossible abstractions. Every portion of humanity has made some contribution to this vast and ugly array.* In the process of time, however, most of them have been smashed. Nevertheless, they are interesting if for no other reason than this: they constitute mankind's first editions of Me.

There is, of course, a very great difference between a symbol and the thing symbolized. Artistic representations have been widely used even in the more advanced religions. It is therefore quite a tribute to the genius of the ancient Hebrew lawgivers that following closely the Second Commandment they utterly denounced images. Centuries later the theologians of Christianity, of whom one of the most outstanding was St. John of Damascus, were loudly declaring that there was a need to modify the Second Commandment in order to permit the people to pay their sacred pictures ceremonial homage. To be sure, there was plenty of opposition. Some of the Fathers—who had been long familiar with pagan practices—put forth strenuous efforts against this tendency which, owing to the weakness of human nature, necessarily runs headlong into idolatry. But the tendency proved too strong to be resisted. After many generations of fluctuating opinion the question came up for final settlement at Nicæa in 787 A. D. when the Council then in session decided in favor of the veneration of sacred pictures. Ikons and images were sanctioned on the ground of their practical utility: a concession to the weaker brethren and a boon to the illiterate. For—so it was declared—religion deals with subjects too abstract for the ordinary mind to grasp. St. Methodius of Constantinople, who was one of the prominent figures at Nicæa, and an ardent champion in defense of sacred images, wrote to his opponents that they ought to teach the people "who in ignorance make a god of an image of Christ, that it is not Christ in the flesh, but only an image of him."

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*It was with this thought in mind that Sir Francis Bacon, in his essay "Of Superstition," wrote that "It were better to have no opinion of God at all, than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him."

To the more cultivated minds like St. Methodius it has always been intellectually possible to reconcile material images with higher religious thought. But for the masses it has been otherwise. Eight hundred years after Methodius aired his opinions, the learned Erasmus wrote to a friend concerning the degenerate state of the Church. "Then there was the invocation of the saints," caustically observes Erasmus. "The images in churches at first served for ornaments and examples. By and by the walls were covered with scandalous pictures. The cult ran to idolatry."*

From the days of dim antiquity until now images have been regarded in the popular mind as being full of some highly etherealized mystic essence emanating directly from Me and thereby capable of casting a potent spell. The ancient Greeks frequently called their statues "agalmata" which literally means: things that the gods delighted in. With their developed sense of artistic beauty, it was felt that any deity would certainly be highly complimented (if not flattered) in a carved semblance of Hellenic sculpture. Because the early religious mind could not grasp the idea of omnipotence it needed the assurance of My presence in a material form as a strong magnetic power in attracting the divine influence, for each statue suggested to the anxious votary a haunting presence of the divine—at least it allowed the image to peep shyly forth upon the worshipper.

All this, of course, is "primitive." But what of

*Letter of August 13, 1529.

man's mind to-day? Very wisely Dr. Lewis R. Farnell, Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, uncompromisingly observes:

> Of the higher world-religions the only two that have remained consistently non-idolatrous are the Judaic and the Islamic. . . . The history of Christendom in this matter has been strange and tragic. The early church upheld for a time the Judaic ideal, but the spirit of the Hellenic and Mediterranean idol-lover triumphed over the spirit of Moses; the resistance of the Byzantine iconoclastic emperors was futile; and the popular religion of Christendom, except within the shrinking borders of Puritan Protestantism, must to-day be called idolatrous. In this phenomenon, very obvious before our eyes, we may discuss a proof that the popular mind is incapable of reaching or at least of abiding by the concept of an omnipresent infinite God.*

There is one predictable thing about man. He will continue to justify all his idols for a long time to come—even those magical impostures that keep him chained to barbarism—simply because he will continue to fashion his conception of Me according to his limited ability.

But it will always be a characteristic of the educated and cultured mind that it will seek to draw a clear line of demarcation between the True Reality which exists and the fancy of imagination which, of course, does not exist. "No mere idea in man's mind is God," writes Professor Douglas C. Macintosh of Yale University. "Not even the God-idea is God,

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*Farnell: *Attributes of God*, p. 36. Gifford Lectures, 1924–25.

any more than a starving man's idea of bread is bread."

THE KING IMAGE

It is now becoming increasingly more evident to the students of early civilization that in the lower stages of culture there is a close relation between the general social organization of a tribe and its conception of Me.

A hunting people develops its animal gods in much the same way that a tribe of fishermen develops fish gods or an agricultural folk evolves gods of rain and grain. With the social advancement of a tribe, certain leaders—such as kings, warriors, and patriarchs—come into control. Their very human characteristics unconsciously serve as patterns for the theological thinking of their people. Among the ancient Hebrews, to take but one example, I was given a residence on the heights of Sinai where, enwrapt in pillars of fire and smoke, I was supposed to have ruled the vast desert with all the qualities of a bedouin sheik.

A king on earth calls for a king on high. (That is how the magnificence of earthly courts came to be transferred to the skies.) With the splendor and expansion of the mighty empires of antiquity men quickly translated the unapproachable majesty of their own kings into a celestial ineffability. It was the strength of the monarchical idea that made it inevitable that I should be conceived, in William James' suggestive phrase, as "a sort of Louis XIV of the heavens."

It is certain that if man had never developed in his social organization the idea of a despotic emperor, no one would ever have had the inspiration to write such hymns as "Come, Thou Almighty King" or "Worship the King All Glorious Above." If, in ancient days, men had known anything about a republican form of government the conception of an arbitrary ruler would, in all probability, never have been reflected on Me. "What man admires on earth," declares Canon Streeter, "that he ascribes to heaven, and he has always fashioned God in the image of his king. A race or a generation which reverences pomp and circumstance, and loves to abase itself before a splendid violence and a domineering will, thinks of God as a celestial Sultan. But a race of free-men will demand a very different kind of God, or will worship not at all."*

Monarchic ideas and oligarchic views have done a great deal to shape man's pictorial image of things divine. It is human history with its thrones and kings, its palaces and its courts, that has given rise to man's idea of Me as an oriental despot of super-heroic size and power, attended by hierarchies of

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*Streeter: *Reality*, p. 149, London, 1926.

celestial beings. If the nation happened to be warlike then I became the "God of Battles"; if peace was the supreme desire then I was referred to as the "Lord of Peace." Man has twisted Me around in his mind to suit his own whims and caprices. A modern theologian will oftentimes shudder when he thinks how his ancestors have tried to gerrymander Me all over the map of their social and political life. Out of sixty-five Russian proverbs pertaining to the Czar, twenty-nine are comparisons between him and Me! ("The Czar is terrible, but God is merciful.")

The process of dethroning kings has gone on with rapid pace within the last two hundred years. Since the World War it has been even worse, so that the idea of "divine right" associated with arbitrary powers is fast disappearing. Within the next century it will, in all probability, be utterly gone. And with it there will go all those monarchic ideas that have pictured Me seated in the far-distant heavens on a soft throne of purple and gold, surrounded by a retinue of adoring angels strumming harps:

> It is inevitable . . . that America, historically the foremost exponent of the democratic "urge" and "outreach" of the universe, and only yesterday the leader in making the world safe for democracy, shall presently engage in the larger task of making God safe for democracy. This is the heart of the new theology. We must have a new God, for both theoretical and practical reasons, a God of the people, by the people, and for the people.*

*Otto: *Things and Ideals*, p. 261, New York, 1924.

There are a great many intelligent people in the world to-day who have outgrown the king-idea; to them it is hopelessly obsolete for the very simple reason that I was never a king in the sense in which the human imagination has pictured Me.

Inasmuch as an honest God is the noblest work of man, intelligent people are now asking themselves whether they ought to retain in theology what they have felt bound to reject in politics. A recent writer touching upon this very delicate subject has wisely said that "Men do not fashion and never have fashioned ideas of God as a mere holiday amusement; they do it in order to explain as best they can the nature of the universe and the truth about themselves."*

Let men go on thinking about Me in the way that is most helpful—a few here and there will catch a glimpse of a clearer and more vital conception. In the meantime, I am in no hurry—a thousand years in My sight is like yesterday when it is past.

SEX NOTIONS

From time immemorial humanity has projected sex distinctions into My divinity. Contrary to the popular notion that I was at first thought of as male, anthropologists are now beginning to learn that early man—that is, man of the Upper Palæolithic

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*Reeman: *Do We Need a New Idea of God ?* p. 59, Philadelphia, 1917.

Age—regarded Me as the *Great Mother.* The earliest known images depict Me in the shape of a woman with the maternal parts greatly exaggerated. . . . In this way primitive man reflected on Me all the life-giving activities of woman.

Women in theology may be divided into two classes: virgins and non-virgins. Both have been worshipped in various parts of the world as an essential part of My divinity. Where the goddess—the female part—is considered a virgin, there has usually arisen the idea that sex-life is essentially impure. (That is how men at times came to feel that there is an element in love displeasing to Me and that virginity is more godly than the state of marriage.) Unquestionably the worship of Mary, adored as a virgin goddess, has exerted a powerful influence on the sex-relationships of European peoples. Maryolatry created a keen sense of shame. This, of course, fitted in well with the monastic life, which at bottom felt ashamed of almost everything that was human. In fact, the more things a man could be ashamed of, the more he imagined himself to be pleasing Me.

While the worship of virgins has given rise to strong notions of chastity, the worship of non-virgins has given scope to vagaries of the opposite extreme—revolting sensuality and licentiousness. The myths of antiquity, particularly those dealing with the operations of nature, were conceived with a large sexual element: the fertilization of the earth by the sky was made the subject of divine adulteries and incests. Because of the immoralities of the classical gods and goddesses Plato attacked the influence of the Greek poets on the education of the youth.

The temptation to sexualize Me has been as widespread as the primitive association of My divinity with the fertility of the fields and the fecundity of animal life. Like Plato, the Hebrew prophets were outspoken against the age-long inclination to sexualize popular theology. They were eminently successful in keeping the feminine principle far from any associations with their Yahweh-concept. One of the worst forms of corruption—the institution of holy prostitution—long associated with the pagan religion of the Canaanites, was the object of their bitterest denunciations.

With the progress in civilization and the rise of man to a dominant position within the framework of ancient society, the male aspect of My divinity grew into much vaster importance. "The God of popular religion has usually been an elderly male," observes Mr. Walter Lippmann; and he informs his readers just why that is so:

> There have been some female divinities worshipped in different parts of the world as there have been matriarchal societies. But by and large the imagination of men has con-

ceived God as a father. They have magnified to a cosmic scale what they have seen at home. It was the male who created the child. It was his seed that the mother cherished in her womb. It was the male who provided for the needs of the family, even if the woman did the hard work. It was the male who fended off enemies. It was the male who laid down the law. It was the name of the male parent which was preserved and passed on from generation to generation. Everything conspired to fix the belief that the true order of life was a hierarchy with a man at the apex.*

Among different people at different stages of culture sex-ideas, pertaining to My divinity, have often been strongly female; more often they have been male. Many complex factors, with which students of human origins are just now becoming acquainted, go a long way toward accounting for these primitive interests. By and large, the never-weary anthropomorphism of man has in varying degrees of intensity reflected sex-life in the skies. Thus, for example, in the teaching of a certain class of Indians called Sakta the whole of the universe was explained in terms of sex—from which they arrived at the notion that "there is no neuter God."

It is significant of the rôle of the feminine principle in the theological thinking of Western civilization that Christianity added to the stern "Jehovah" of the Jews the adoration of Mary. By giving her the full status of a goddess it was possible for mediæval men to soften the harsh features of My Hebraic Fa-

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*Lippmann: *Preface to Morals*, p. 91 f., New York, 1929.

therhood by a sympathetic suggestion of pagan Motherhood. The idea of a Holy Family—all families are based on sex—made it possible for the Italian artists to paint Me as a patriarch in close association with Mary, whom they naïvely portrayed as a blonde maiden of Tuscany.

For a long time yet to come it will be necessary for intelligent theologians to guard their fellow men against the strong human tendency to relapse into primitive ways of thinking. Even the use of such beautifully symbolic language as the "Fatherhood of God" must be employed with caution against perilous excess. "When, therefore," writes Rev. Dr. John Wright Buckham, "the question arises, as it sometimes does, Why choose fatherhood for the symbol of God, rather than motherhood? the answer cannot be detached from the history of religion. While the Christian mother has as much, if not more, than the father, of those loving and protective qualities which Christianity conceives as belonging to God, still, in the history of religion the idea of fatherhood has been freer from sex implications than has that of motherhood."*

Finding it extremely difficult even in the twentieth century to escape this sex-type of anthropomorphism, many modern sects prefer to designate Me by the term "Father-Mother." By the use of the hy-

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*Buckham: *The Humanity of God*, p. 38, New York, 1928.

phen it is felt that the good values deeply embedded in both concepts are brought together.

REVELATIONS

Ever since man became man he has been dreaming. His puny mind, at first unable to make clear distinctions, finally arrived at the idea of spirit not as something altogether distinct from his body but as a kind of "double" or second self. This he concluded was the truth that lay back of all those queer experiences of the night. Did he not frequently roam through fragrant and unfamiliar forests while his body remained all night in the smelly but familiar old cave? Why did he see and talk to the dead several times last week, particularly after the cannibal feasts out there near the river bank?

Not given to any high order of analysis early man, half-consciously, half-unconsciously, assumed that dreams were the favorite channels through which I revealed Myself. Already he had the personal evidence of his own dream! What was more natural than to conclude that the chief of the tribe, or the powerful shaman, or the medicine man, by reason of their superiority would be in possession of even better connections with Divinity than he could ever expect to command for himself?

The old Greeks looked upon dreams as My messengers to men. Pindar and Æschylus mention the well-known idea that during sleep the mind is unfettered and can soar into the realm of spirit, commune with Me, and clearly see the future. Even the scientific Aristotle looked upon dreams as the source of things divine. In common with the ancient Babylonians the Greeks erected a huge body of religious dream-lore called *Oneirocritica.** Among the favorite practices was "temple-sleeping"—a method of enticing dreams by sleeping about the shrine where I was wont to appear and give counsel. (Even to-day in modern Greece the dream is regarded as the usual method to learn My will or that of a saint. Dream-books are still popular. They may be found in houses where the Bible is unknown.)

Among the Hebrews the dream occupied a prominent place in their ideas of revelation, it being long supposed that I used this type of communication when I spoke to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The celebrated story of the ladders at Bethel is full of the very old Semitic notions of how I could haunt a locality and disturb the slumber of a patriarch. Prophets, seers, necromancers, diviners, priests, kings, and shepherds—all had their dreams in ancient Israel, which were regarded as supernatural messages direct from Me.

Frequently these dream-revelations were very crude and ugly, reflecting the worst features of early

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*This was the title of a treatise in five books by Artemidorus of Ephesus.

Hebrew life. In a dream I was supposed to have warned Abimelech king of Gerar against taking Sarah for his wife, just as I later warned Laban not to molest Jacob (despite the fact that Jacob's actions had been quite unethical).

In the minds of the Prophets—those daring champions of progress—the crude dream was sublimated into glorious visions. It is no wonder that men still pay them homage! They were artists of the soul, creating in My Name sublime pictures. With the vocabulary of earth they spelled out the lessons of heaven. No story of man's conception of Me could properly overlook or ignore the moral distance between Jacob's idea of a dream-revelation and Isaiah's sublime vision of the day "when nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks."

It is a short step from the spoken word to the written pronouncement. The same halo of sanctity that hung over the seer's utterances during his lifetime was usually transferred to his permanent message. More so! as it found its way on parchment. Death always heightens the value of a man's words, especially when those words deal with the subject of religion. The various guilds of prophets and the various colleges of priests produced their collections of sacred stories, histories, laws, sermons, legends, and a vast array of sacred formulæ, incantations, and psalms.

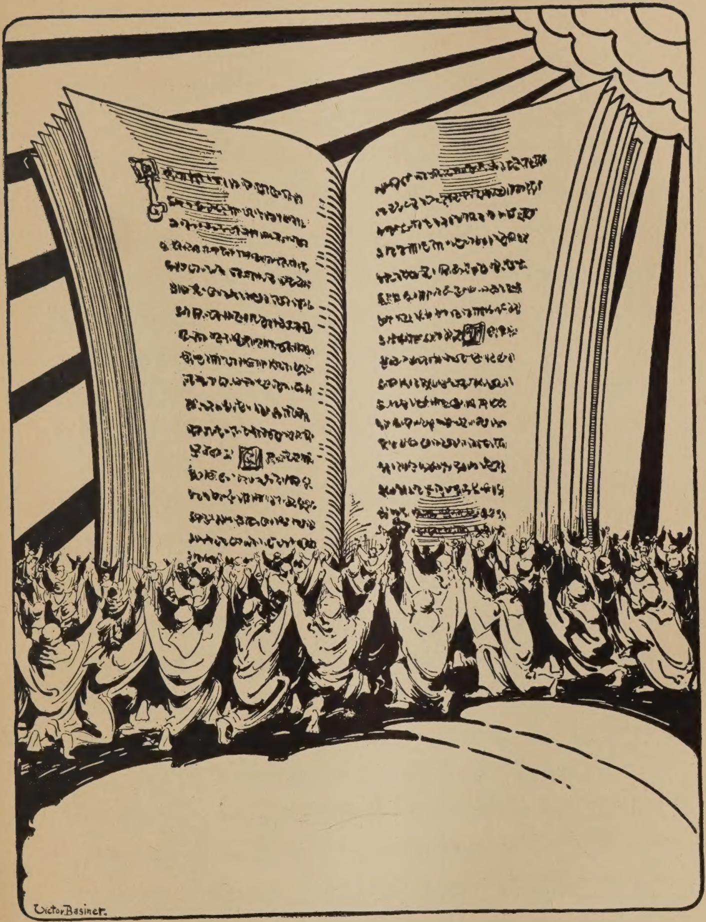
Preserved by faithful disciples they became the deposits of the ancestral religion. With the passage of time a high veneration and holy regard attached themselves to these writings. They were now "sacred literature"—divine revelations—because My will was believed to have been made known in letters set down by the wise leaders of old who merely acted as My penmen. "God takes away the minds of the poets," declared Plato in explanation of this particular type of revelation, "and uses them as His ministers, and He also uses diviners and holy prophets, in order that we who hear them may know that they speak not of themselves who utter these priceless words in a state of unconsciousness, but that God is the speaker, and that through them He is conversing with us."

Baffled by the mysterious meanderings of life, men have not only resorted to dreams and books as the sure media through which I revealed Myself but they have also claimed as much for their churches, synagogues, and mosques. These vast institutions of organized religion have stood in opposition to each other for centuries, each one setting up its rival claims in My Name, each one honestly but mistakenly believing that I have especially chosen it to safeguard My choicest revelations, each upholding the notion that My communications were given by so direct a means that they could be open to no doubt or question: and therefore must be accepted *in toto* without regard to inherent likelihood.

I ought to be pitied as an imbecile God if, desiring to miraculously reveal Myself, I went about it in such a blundering fashion. A man of average ability would have done much better. He would at least have made it clear and plain exactly where his revelations were to be found and would not have messed things up so badly that honest coin cannot be distinguished from counterfeit. If he had any love for his fellow men he would not have confused them so miserably that they would have to slaughter each other to prove their rival claims.

It is a strange reflection on Me that in spite of all supernatural support, revelation still lends itself to confusion and ambiguity. Notwithstanding all that men have said and done, it has failed to furnish the world that safe and steady light it set out to guarantee. On the contrary, it has more often led men into wild wandering in dangerous and toilsome ways.

There are fashions in theology. Once upon a time revelations were more powerful than they are today. But the modern spirit has depotentialized them. No longer do they bear upon their front the shining stones of the high-priest's breastplate, in the glitter of which men are to discover My divine will. The plastic, fluent, growing nature of human life contra-


Victor Basiner.

BIBLIOLATRY

If men could easily make a fetich out of a block of stone it is not at all surprising that in time they took to the worship of books.

dicts a theory of religion that is shaped in terms of infallible revelations.

Men are slowly learning that I do not send truth out of the skies wrapped up in a package. The only way to truth is through ordinary, normal human experience which patiently investigates the facts. For that reason modern-minded people no longer take seriously the claims of supernatural revelations. They have found it useless to rest experience upon phenomena which cannot be verified. . . . "Nothing," once declared an ancient teacher, "is to be believed which is unworthy of God."

BIBLIOLATRY—WORSHIPPING "HOLY" BOOKS

People have made idols from a wide range of materials—sticks and stones, dumb cattle and rugged mountain peaks, the sun and the moon as well as the stars. There is hardly a single object of nature that hasn't played a rôle in the religion of some primitive tribe. If men could easily make a fetich out of a block of stone it is not at all surprising that in time they took to the worship of books.

The art of writing is so common nowadays that, except in very backward countries, people do not regard it any longer as a "sacred" accomplishment. But in ancient times the awe of writing, when combined with the awe of great personalities, produced certain documents that came to be regarded as holy.

When one remembers that human nature is pretty much the same all over the world, one can readily understand that sacred books are not limited to any one particular section of humanity but are found among widely distant peoples—India with her Vedas, China with the King and Shu, Persia with the Avesta, the Hebrews with the Old Testament, the Christians with their New Testament and the Mohammedans with their Koran.

Due to the vast strides of progress within the last century, sensible people now realize that all bibles are man-made. Years ago a bible was fervently held to be a heavenly revelation, a divine book literally dictated by Me for human purposes. Now it is known that a bible is a *human* book written for *divine* purposes. Instead of being My revelation to man, every bible is man's revelation of Me.

Perhaps the most extreme illustration of the mechanical view of divine dictation (sometimes called "verbal inspiration") is the Koran. In that book one can find a liberal sprinkling of the word "say," by which the Prophet meant that I am the principal speaker throughout, dictating to Mohammed what is to be "said" to the people. "Verily," announces the Holy Book of Islam in My name, "we have sent down the Koran in the Arabic language so that you may understand it." Elsewhere Mohammed claimed that the Koran, revealed to him by the angel Gabriel, was copied from a book kept in heaven, of which parts were sent down from time to time, and that the Koran, being My uncreated word, always existed at My right hand until I commissioned angel Gabriel to convey it piecemeal to the Prophet as each foreordained need should arise.

Among the Brahmanists there arose the belief that the Vedic hymns were not composed by mortals but that they existed with Me before creation, it being generally supposed that I taught them to the sages. Centuries later the Hebrews arrived at the same idea. According to the Rabbis "he who denies the divine origin of the Torah" will be excluded from Heaven; and "even if he asserted that all the Torah is of divine origin except such and such a verse, which was said not by God but by Moses" it will still be held as an unpardonable offense.*

For more than eighteen centuries the rabbinical views of the bible swayed the thought of Western civilization. Repeatedly, over and over again, one may find strong statements setting forth the exact nature of a supposedly divine dictation. Typical of them all (and as late as 1861), the following pronouncement was given by Dean Burgon in a lecture at Oxford University in which I am pictured as a superhuman ventriloquist:

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*These quotations are taken from Rabbinical literature—Mishna Sanhedrin (10, or in some versions, 11). The Baraita is from T. B. Sanhedrin, 99a.

> The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it [where are we to stop?], every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God,—not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him who sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.

Almost every subject has its good and bad side, and so it is with any bible. While these books have rendered much beneficial service to civilization and progress, they have frequently been misused to foster persecution, war, slavery, and ignorance. At some time or other they have all been worshipped as parchment or paper idols full of that mystic potency which, it is claimed, hovers about a "divine" origin.

In the past, people looked upon their kings as the very embodiment of My divinity and through their human voices it was believed there spoke My voice. It has been somewhat similar with bibles: in their pages men have fancied that they have heard Me speak with an immediateness and finality nowhere else to be found. It was with this view in mind that St. Augustine shackled the thought of Europe for over a thousand years when he declared that "Nothing is to be accepted save on the authority of Scripture, since greater is that authority than all the powers of the human mind."

PICTURES OUT OF THE PAST

All bibles—just because they are man's revelations—reveal ideas about Me ranging from semi-savage conceptions to very highly developed ethical notions. Sometimes these ideas are so jumbled together that one may find, lying side by side, the most advanced views together with the most primitive beliefs. "I confess it has been for many years a problem to me," once wrote the distinguished scholar Max Muller, "how the Sacred Books of the East should, by the side of so much that is fresh, natural, simple, beautiful, and true, contain so much that is not only unmeaning, artificial, and silly, but even hideous and repellent."

It is characteristic of men that as they feel their way to higher thoughts they pass through many grotesque stages of development. For example, it is recorded in the Book of Exodus that, shortly after the promulgation of the Ten Commandments, which carry the injunction against killing, I ordered one section of the Jews to massacre the other:

> Thus, saith the Lord, the God of Israel: Put ye every man his sword upon his thigh, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.*

In one of Napoleon's letters, Junot was requested to "Shoot, say, sixty persons." A contemporary writer in comment adds this: "If that makes him [Napoleon] a monster, what shall we say of a being who asks fathers to murder their sons, and sons their fathers in cold blood, and that, too, immediately after he had said, 'Thou shalt not kill'?"

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*Exodus 32 : 27.

Mixed up within the ancient Hebrew mind were many lofty conceptions about Me together with many undeveloped ideas that belonged to the infancy of the race. Only after centuries of progress have the various peoples of earth been able bravely to disencumber their religion from those half-savage features which are so contrary to the ethical outlook of the twentieth century. Even so great a thinker as Jeremiah was essentially a child of his age when, in talking to his people, he made Me utter these words:

> Thus saith the Lord: Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you.*

And Ezekiel, a fellow contemporary of Jeremiah, put caustic words in My mouth as he represents Me speaking to the children of Israel in an overheated moment:

> Wherefore I gave them statutes that were not good, and ordinances whereby they should not live . . . to the end that they might know that I am the Lord.†

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*Jeremiah 18:11.

†Ezekiel 20:25, 26. In commenting on this passage, Thomas Paine said: "This, so far from being the Word of God, is horrid blasphemy against Him." See Paine's pamphlet on the *Examination of the Prophecies*, New York, 1807. Yet Paine was called an atheist!

Centuries after these sayings were declared, that famous Jew of Tarsus—St. Paul—did not hesitate to write in one of his epistles that I deliberately cause people to believe in a lie, the purpose being this: that I may have an excuse to damn such folks for not believing the truth!

> And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

What relieves this entire situation is the sincere protest against immoral ideas about Me found within the Bible itself. As the scroll of Scripture is unrolled it can be seen that man becomes less naïve and more mature in his thinking. There is, for example, just such a case in point in St. James' eloquent denial that I tempt man: "Let no man say when he is tempted: I am tempted of God."† (It was essentially in this spirit of St. James that John Wesley once said to a Calvinist: "Your God is my Devil.")

But progress is very slow. . . . The pictures of the past frequently die down only to rise again from their discredit and mould the beliefs of centuries. . . . Millions of human beings, who surely ought to know better, still impute to Me the motives of a vindictive goblin. The Anglican prayerbook has a collect for the Festival of Innocents which the church celebrates on December 28 in commemoration of a fictitious massacre of which I am piously regarded as the author. The prayer for this day which celebrates the slaughter begins like this: "O God, who madest infants to glorify thee by their deaths . . ."

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*II Thessalonians 2:11–12. In the Koran (Surah 74:34) Mohammed is not slow in matching St. Paul when he says that "God leads astray whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases."

†The Epistle of St. James 1:13.

One could easily extract scores of like examples in almost all the prayerbooks of the world's denominations as an indication of how sincere but misguided men use Biblical stories as the "oracles of God" to picture Me as an immoral monstrosity.

To be sure there are many hopeful signs of progress coming from sincere and loyal churchmen. Speaking of contemplated reforms in the *Anglican Book of Common Prayer,* the Rev. Dr. Charles Gore, one of the leading figures in the Church of England, unhesitatingly assures his fellow men that the proper authorities will be asked "for the removal of passages from the service-book which are not really scriptural and which are a stumbling-block to many men's consciences, like the phrase which describes infants as 'children of wrath' . . . The full list of needed changes or additions would be a fairly long one. Some of these reforms it seems likely we shall have speedily granted. For some of them we may have to wait."*

*Gore: *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, p. 354, London, 1924.

SACRED AND PROFANE

More important to early man than his conception of Me was his idea of the sacred and the profane. Long before he arrived at any definite notion of My divinity certain things startled him, or terrified and astonished him. It was largely out of these deep-seated psychological reactions that there arose by slow degrees the primitive notion that certain objects, persons, events, or actions possess a highly mysterious power—a kind of fiendish electricity—and that this mysterious power may either hurt and destroy or heal and bless.

Modern investigators who have laboriously pushed their way into the subject of primitive religions are fond of using the word "taboo" to designate a full chapter in this story of how men began to think of Me. Although the word itself is taken from the Polynesian (meaning to "mark off"), the idea embodies mental property common to pre-scientific mankind.

As a rudimentary aspect of religion the notion of taboo became easily associated with Me. What was more natural than to suppose that I was the mysterious power resident within the terrifying object? The ancient Hebrews, for example, were in possession of a boxlike structure called the Ark of the Covenant. It was a highly venerated religious object carried about the Judæan highlands by the priests. In times of war it was carted into the battle-field to help the hosts of Israel to victory; in times of peace the Ark rested in some rude sanctuary, there to protect the prosperity of the nation.

Now this Ark, because it was so highly venerated, came to be regarded as My especial abode. For that reason the ancient Hebrew believed it was possessed of a mysterious power coming directly from Me that could bring either woe or prosperity, terrible destruction or surpassing victory, unbelievable pestilence or great fertility and happiness. For that reason the Ark was considered taboo—that is, so tremendously sacred that it had to be "marked off" from all ordinary things. No one was allowed to come close to it, except its own sanctified caretakers, lest a mere touch or too close a gaze should result in a breaking forth of this mysterious power into death-dealing blows.

In the Hebrew Old Testament there are several very old narratives which tell in quaint language certain experiences of the ancient Hebrews in connection with their Ark. Beginning with the fourth chapter of the First Book of Samuel, there is a story relating how the Hebrews went out to battle the Philistines. The first encounter was disastrous—"Israel was smitten before the Philistines." Without wasting any time the Hebrews concluded that it would be a good idea to muster more strength; and inasmuch as they could not increase their numbers they thought it would be good to call in My assistance. "Let us fetch the Ark of the Covenant of God out of Shiloh unto us, that it may come among us and save us out of the hand of our enemies."*

In the second battle the Hebrews were again defeated. Worse still: the Ark was captured by the Philistines and taken to the city of Ashdod, where it was placed in the Temple of the great idol Dagon. Here in this heathen shrine I was supposed to have performed some rather magical feats out of the sacred box, for it was subsequently reported that I twice knocked down the idol and in addition to that sent a plague of hemorrhoids upon the entire population. "And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said: 'The Ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us; for His hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god!' "†

After the Ark had been among the Philistines for several months their wise men decided that it would be to the best interests of their own people to return the sacred object to the Israelites. Having provided sacrifices, ceremonies, and presents, they sent it away on a newly built cart drawn by two milch cows.

In the course of their wanderings the cows reached the borders of Beth-shemesh and stopped on the

*I Samuel 4:3.

†I Samuel 5:7.

property of a certain man by the name of Joshua. Thinking that a great favor had been bestowed upon them the Beth-shemites ran into Joshua's field and out of curiosity "looked into" the Ark—whereupon I smote the men of Beth-shemesh (for they broke the taboo):

> And He smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had gazed upon the Ark of the Lord, even He smote of the people seventy men, and fifty thousand men: and the people mourned because the Lord had smitten the people with a great slaughter.*

Taboos have taken on a variety of interesting forms. One of the earliest and most persistent of them all has centred around foods. Dietetic regulations based upon taboo are by no means peculiar to the Hebrews; they are found under diverse forms, but with substantially the same character, in innumerable religions. Among the Todas of South India the buffalo is a sacred animal and its milk may not be drunk. It is taboo! And the Todas feel that if any one were foolish enough to commit the sin of breaking this prohibition everything would somehow go wrong because of My explosive anger. The ominous sentence is, "That person will be cut off from his people"—exterminated by a divine act. It was out of this fear that the Hebrews forbade eating the flesh of the hog. It was taboo.

*I Samuel 6 : 19.

Exceptionally strong taboos have been formed around speech. Certain words, sounds or formulas are sacred and must not be uttered, for fear of incurring My wrath. Individuals may be taboo to one another as when speech with a mother-in-law is forbidden. Oftentimes there is a prohibition against the wife pronouncing her husband's name. In the Australian initiation ceremonies speaking was taboo to the initiates for certain periods. Among the Hebrews the name "Yahweh" was surrounded with such an awesome speech interdiction that only the priests were allowed to utter it.

There is hardly a department of human endeavor but what has been tabooed in My Name. In the confused reasoning of primitive man the taboo was mistakenly conceived as the supernatural. Sex-relations, clothing, business, food, childbirth, speech—all have come under various forms of arbitrary and senseless restrictions. Most of them have had no more reason behind them than the biblical horror against picking up sticks on the Sabbath day.

Through the process of rationalizing their taboos men have been able to extricate themselves from a vast mass of traditional superstitions. The irrational restrictions: *touch not, taste not, handle not,* have long begun to give way to the logic of investigation and analysis.

The perpetual effort of men is to learn to act so that nothing but desirable effects will follow their actions. Taboo was merely a device of the pre-logical age to solve this problem. But it was all wrong. No ritualistic means need be used to save any person from the supposed dangers of the spirit world.

By rejecting the dualism of taboo, with its false categories of the sacred and the profane, men may learn to know, if they are so minded, the majesty of the laws of cause and effect.

HOLY THINGS

Closely connected with notions of taboo is the idea of the holy. In all ages and in all places men have had their holy cities, holy grounds, holy institutions, holy books, holy vessels, holy garments, holy laws, holy names, holy languages, holy creeds, holy seasons, holy persons,—and very often—holy wars.

Primitive man conceived holiness as a mysterious power. Certain things not only inspired him with awe but because they were associated with the unseen they were thought to be valuable as the source of the health of his body, the productivity of his soil, and the fertility of his cattle.

Any place in which supernatural power was supposed to have been manifested became sacred. Because primitive religious conceptions subjected Me to the limitations of space and time I could easily be bounded: consequently, whenever a given locality was celebrated as the scene of My natural haunts it was usually decorated with a shrine intended to preserve the mysterious influence emanating from the holy spot. The stone upon which Jacob had a dream became Bethel—"The House of God." Over a black boulder in Mecca the ancient Arabians built the Kaaba, an oblong shrine that was taken over and appropriated by Islam.

Grottoes were especially sacred to the ancient Phœnicians and Greeks. The original sanctuary of the temple of Apollo at Delos was a holy cave. Trees and mountain tops also came in for their share of veneration. For example, among the Teutonic peoples general worship was conducted in a sacred forest—a holy grove untouched by hands. (The earliest Teutonic word for temple means also wood.)

Holy languages have been as prominent in religion as holy places. As speech was supposed to have been taught by Me the idea of a sacred tongue has been exceedingly wide-spread. Orthodox Islam stoutly maintained that the Koran was written in Arabic because it was My choice language, the speech of the angels. With equal fervor the rabbis held to the sanctity of Hebrew. Constantly described as a "holy tongue" it was dogmatically believed to have been the "original" in which I spoke to Adam. "The whole of antiquity affirms," St. Jerome remarked in support of the rabbinic point of view, "that Hebrew, in which the Old Testament is written, was the beginning of all human speech."

Despite the zeal of the rabbis, the doctrines of the theologians and the support of both church and synagogue, the science of comparative philology revealed that Hebrew, far from being the oldest tongue on earth, is one of the youngest. Thousands of years before the Israelites appeared on the stage of history men spoke languages now forgotten. Long before the days of Abraham the Egyptians were talking to each other on the banks of the Nile.

As each religion has believed its own language to be the most holy, so each people has fondly believed its own sacred city to be the actual centre of the earth. But as philology destroyed the former notion it remained for geography to shatter the other. Jerusalem to the Jews is the Holy City; to the Catholics it is Rome; to the Tibetans it is Lhasa.

What mischief is possible from such theology can be reviewed in the horror of the Crusades. An international feeling had gripped the peoples of mediæval Europe that their troubles would be largely solved if the sacred territory of Palestine could be taken out of pagan hands. Lone pilgrims who had visited the holy places about the Dead Sea had already brought back wild tales of miracles and revelations. Gradually there grew up the belief that to visit Palestine would be more beneficial to the soul than any other earthly enterprise.

Soon, the whole of Europe was on its tiptoes waiting the word of the Pope to proceed to the Holy Land, so that Christian worship could be conducted in spots nearer to Heaven. Despite disease and hardship the stream of pilgrims made its way over the Alps and across the Mediterranean. Thousands died on the road. So powerful was the zeal for the holy soil that even the youngsters of Europe were supported in a scheme to organize a Children's Crusade which ended in ghastly disaster.

The Crusaders were not only anxious to regain Palestine, they were equally determined to lay hold of the sacred relics that had been so long played up to them by the fanatical clergy. There was a vast craving for these holy curiosities. During the fourth Crusade, when Constantinople was captured, the victors plundered the shrines and reliquaries of the city and sent home ship-loads of objects to the churches and palaces of the West.

Among the more curious treasures brought from Palestine and Constantinople by the piety of the Crusaders, were Noah's beard, the horns ascribed to Moses, the stone on which Jacob slept at Bethel, hairs from Balaam's ass and the branch in which Absalom was caught. One of the tears which Jesus shed at Lazarus' grave was in the keeping of Vendome. A tract was subsequently written about this holy tear, which showed that it had been caught up by an angel and given to Mary Magdalene, who preserved it in a precious vessel and carried it to France.

It was inevitable that thinking men should some day break out into an open revolt against holy relics. In his characteristically blunt way Martin Luther stated in his catechism—"They are all dead stuff which can do no one any good." That judgment has grown apace among intelligent people during the last three hundred years. That a relic should possess some occult quality which magically appeals to My favor is now being surrendered as a piece of primitive thinking incompatible with the higher teaching that "God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

SACRIFICES

Much of My biography must perforce be taken up with crude ideas simply because man has thought of Me by analogy in his own human terms. Nowhere in all the vast network of civilization is this more evident than in the wide-spread notion of sacrifice. For here man's anthropomorphic imagination could easily argue that as an earthly ruler needed to be placated, bribed, flattered and cajoled, so might the superhuman ruler or deity. When an oriental desired a favor of his ruler or chieftain he approached him with many gifts, as well as with prostrations and verbal compliments. Such oleaginous flattery was intended to throw a spell and thereby charm the potentate into granting the petitioner his request. Ideas like this assumed that My methods of government are those of an Eastern sultan. (The Sultan is very good to his people, and may overlook a good deal of disorder; but he is capable of ordering a massacre if provoked too far.)

Primitive minds have always looked upon Me as being sufficiently like men to need what they need —consequently the ritual of sacrifice with its foods, drinks, and costly gifts. What men have desired for themselves in nourishment and pleasure they have unhesitatingly ascribed to Me. Does the head of the tribe or the despotic sultan get very angry? Does his favor need to be won by a costly bribe? Inevitably man evolved the belief in the magical effects of sacrifice for he conceived Me in terms of anger and ruthless vengeance . . .

Various types of foods have been offered to Me in different countries and in widely separated ages. Burning flesh and the sight of palpitating blood were supposed to be the most effective means of wresting My favors. The savage tried to intoxicate Me with hot roasts, sizzling fats, and reeking altars, on the principle so well stated in the Rigveda (X 130, 1) that sacrifice is "the thread spun out to reach the gods."

In one of the most primitive sections of the Hebrew bible there is told the story of two brothers—Cain and Abel—who engaged themselves in a tragic quarrel over sacrifice. In this old legend I am portrayed as a lover of roast meats. Cain, who was a farmer, offered Me some vegetables, but Abel brought a head or two of cattle. Both, of course, were trying desperately hard to please Me. According to this story, I sniffed Abel's roasts with entire satisfaction and frowned upon Cain's vegetables. Whereupon Cain killed Abel. And thus the first quarrel over ritual led to murder!

Frequently people went so far in this folly of sacrifice that they actually offered up to Me human victims. Pitiable savage that he was, man believed in personal agencies behind natural phenomena, whose favor could only be secured or malice averted by the sacrifice of human life. In the morning twilight of the human day he stained his religion with blood.

Among the fairly cultured Aztecs of Mexico the idea that I demanded human blood was a deep-rooted conviction. Cortez and his army were nauseated by the sight of human beings slaughtered atop a high altar. With a rugged stone knife the Mexican priest would tear open the victim's breast; then tear-ing out his heart, while it still throbbed with life, would lift it with a huge spoon and insert the flesh between the lips of a hideous stone idol that was supposed to be a representation of Me. . . .

It has been carefully figured out that the ancient Hebrew ritual called for an annual slaughter of 1,093 lambs, 113 bulls, 37 rams and 32 goats besides oil, fine flour, and incense in huge quantities. Yet when compared to the costly pomp and staggering slaughter of Babylonia, the Hebrew ritual pales into the insignificance of a backwoods-people pathetically imitating their rich metropolitan neighbors.

A vital element in sacrifice was the belief that I demanded the best—the best was none too good for primitive man's conception of Me. That is why Abraham was ready to immolate Isaac. That is why the King of Moab and Manasseh of Judæa actually sacrificed their own sons, and Agamemnon offered up his daughter. The principal idea in all sacrifice—although it is by no means the only one—has been to placate My divine anger. A displeased god needs to be appeased; the terrible divine wrath must be averted or turned aside. It is this idea that still lingers on even in modern religions as the dogma of the Atonement.

In face of such a powerful custom it is remarkable how strongly the Hebrews protested against human sacrifice. That story in Genesis about Me calling upon Abraham to offer up his only son was written not so much as a test of Abraham's faith as a *protest* against the idea that I demand human victims. And one of the chief reasons for the overthrow of Manasseh's régime and the establishment of the Deuteronomic reform was the people's awful disgust with a Hebrew king who could sink so low as to slaughter his own son.

In the course of time the progressive Hebrew leaders began to see through the stupidity and foolishness of it all. It was not simply human sacrifice but all types of burnt offerings and slaughtered oblations that they eventually opposed in a superbly determined effort to lift this horror of darkness from the souls of their fellow men. The prophet Hosea, speaking in My name, denounced the whole system, in these words: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings."* Jeremiah poured out his scorn on sacrificial worship and in addition to that took occasion to deny flatly the ancient Hebrew dogma that I specifically commanded the Israelites to sacrifice burnt-offerings.† It was one of the psalmists that ridiculed it with blighting sarcasm when he wrote in My name: "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?"*

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*Hosea 6:6.

†See his famous denial, Jeremiah 7:21–24. In like manner Buddha ridiculed the Brahmanic ritual (Cf. Majjhima 7; Digha 13).

Although sacrifices have long ceased to be a vital element in advanced religions, the slaughter of animals still lingers in Arabia. One of the greatest and most profoundly sacred of all Moslem festivals is known as the Festival of Sacrifices in whose celebration devout Mohammedans come to Mecca from all parts of the world in order to participate in the holy formalities. Notwithstanding its high antiquity the modern young Turks are plainly out of sympathy with this Festival.

The following editorial, which appeared recently in a Turkish paper, advances the same argument used by the old Hebrew prophets more than two thousand years ago.

> Every religion has some traditions which are considered sacred. Those traditions are sometimes inherited from the past, but mostly taken from other religions and appropriated during the course of time. . . . Primitive men have felt the need of offering gifts and sacrifices to gods in order to appease their anger. . . . We find this custom among the Egyptians, Phœnicians, and other ancient and primitive peoples. Later religions prohibited the offering of men as barbarity, and have kept only to animal sacrifice.
>
> This custom of killing sacrifices at our Festival also has come to us from those earliest stages of primitive men, and has been perpetuated till the present time. But to-day we are not in such a low condition as to express our fear or gratitude by offering an animal. This might be a very proper

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*Psalms 50: 12–14.

> way for the primitive peoples. A civilized man does not need to resort to such means to express his feelings. . . .*

In concluding his editorial the writer approves Mustafa Kemal's suggestion not to kill animals at this feast, but to give the money to the National Aeroplane Association!

DIVINATIONS

That distinguished French scholar, Bouché-Leclercq, after he had made an exhaustive study of astrology in relation to the thought of antiquity, declared that it was not a waste of time to find out how other people have wasted theirs. Whatever else divination has meant to humanity it will always have a significant place in the story of how men began to think of Me.

It was early assumed—along strictly anthropomorphic lines—that if there is a god then he must care enough for his creatures to communicate to them his will. It was in this assumption that divination was born.

Many were the methods of trying to divine My thoughts. In their crude half-intelligent way men believed in a vast number of omens and oracles: the flight of birds, the rustling of the wind through the trees, the vapor rising from subterranean caves, the entrails of animals, the movements of the stars, the

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***Resmli Ay*, August, 1927.

dreams of prophets or seers and—perhaps the most important of all—the liver of sacrificed sheep.

Because of their number and complication, and also because of their serious import to the welfare of the community, the priests took over the function of interpreting all such phenomena. It was plainly their duty to tell the people what I wanted. Suppose a king planned to build a canal: it was necessary to know whether I favored it or whether I would show My opposition in the form of some accident or tragedy. Would the crops be successful or would I send a dire pestilence? Would the impending war be a triumph for My worshippers or would I allow them to go down in defeat? Suppose they were to start on a military expedition and of a sudden a flock of birds should pass over them: what did such an omen mean? Was it a favorable sign sent from Me or an unfavorable one? Questions like these have plagued the minds of men from time immemorial.

Knowing little or nothing of the laws of cause and effect and feeling themselves at the mercy of whim and caprice, it is not to be wondered that people reached out for an escape from their fears. What does the deity want? How can he be pleased? At the oracle in Delphi, where the Pythia went into a frenzy, inarticulate ravings were believed to be celestial messages inspired directly by Me. At Dodona, where the wind blew through the leaves of a sacred oak tree, the priests supposed themselves able to interpret the sounds as personal messages from My heavenly abode. Among the Hebrews the Urim and Thummim were designed to tell the Israelites just what I wanted them to do. Everywhere men labored to find My revelations in some artificial scheme; and if they did not always take to the frenzy or dreams of their prophets, they tried to arrive at divine knowledge by some mechanical interpretation. . . .

It is to Babylonia that the student of divination must turn, to witness the wholesale effect of omens upon an entire civilization. For here it was very early believed that My will could be read in the liver of a sacrificed animal. Now the people of Babylonia were not a silly, irrational folk: they built up their liver theology upon the orthodox assumptions of primitive religion. According to the accepted standards it was widely held that in some mysterious way I identified Myself with the animal brought to Me in sacrifice. The life—that is, the *blood* of this animal, became My life and blood; the animal's soul became attuned to My soul. In that way a channel was formed through which men could reach My thoughts. Therefore—so it was assumed—in proportion as the signs on the liver of the sacrificed animal could be correctly read, My secret purposes could be made correspondingly clear.

Out of this effort to determine My mind a huge traffic in liver inspection was slowly evolved as a most important feature of ancient theology, for "the liver is the workshop of the gods." Here the destinies of the future are to be divined: here I forge the secret things of the unknown. What was more reasonable, in view of such a belief, than to subject every aspect of this organ to a keen analysis? What more important than to note its variations, its peculiarities, its abnormalities? If My mind is revealed in a liver, then its lobes and ducts, with all the fissures, cross-lines, curves, and markings must be used as a divine map from which men are to chart their courses.

To read a liver was a matter of grave concern, and for this vocation a priest had to be highly trained. On the one hand, he had to be an "inspector"; but he also had to familiarize himself with the literature on the subject in order to know just what had happened to his forefathers under similar circumstances. Archæologists, unearthing hundreds of clay tablets in the ruins of the great centres of Babylonian and Assyrian civilization, have brought to light whole libraries dealing with liver divination. Taking one of these tablets, as a mere example, it will be noted that in response to a question put to a priest whether or not an uprising that had taken place would be successful the following report was given to the king after a careful examination of the sheep's liver:

> The cystic duct is normal; the hepatic duct double, and if the left part of the hepatic duct lies over the right part of the hepatic duct, the weapons of the enemy will prevail over the weapons of the ruler.
>
> The hepatic vein is not normal—this means siege.
>
> There is a depression to the right of the cystic duct—overthrow of army.
>
> The left side of the gall-bladder is firm,—conquest of the enemy. . . .
>
> The lower part of the liver to the right is crushed—the leader will be crushed, or there will be confusion in the army. . . .*

With the spread of Babylonian civilization, liver omens made their way into far-distant countries. The Greek peoples adopted this method of divination at a very early date and gave it a place of vast importance in their theology. Even so brilliant a thinker as Plato regarded the liver as the seat of life—the mirror in which the power of thought is reflected. Farther to the west the ancient Etruscans seemed especially well pleased with the idea. Not only did they whole-heartedly adopt it for themselves, but they were instrumental in introducing the knowledge into Rome. Once lodged in the city of the Cæsars, divination by livers played an important rôle in the religious life of its citizens until it degenerated into the rankest kind of trickery. The story is told of a certain augur who had developed his charlatanism in a very interesting way. He was frankly desirous

*Jastrow: *Aspects of Religious Belief in Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 186, New York, 1911.

of obtaining a good omen from Me that would encourage the army about to engage in battle. Upon the palm of his hand he wrote the words, *"Victory of the King"* backward, then pressing the smooth surface of a liver against his hand, he managed to produce an easily legible revelation of My will.

Many other forms of divination were used besides liver omens. Gazing up at the stars, ancient men came to believe in a co-ordination between the happenings on earth and the movements of the heavenly bodies. Sun, moon, and planets were all supposed to reveal My varied purposes—that is, if their actions could be correctly read. Out of this belief there arose the vast structure of ancient astrology which was just another attempt to read My mind in terms of some external sign.

Despite the grotesque and even repulsive elements of divination it must be remembered that in the course of time it led to beneficial discoveries. The study of the liver, begun in utter superstition, opened up the beginnings of the science of anatomy; and astrology marked the first crude efforts in the direction of astronomy. As man's mind is always full of high explosives it was inevitable that the spell of divination would sooner or later be completely shattered. And so it was. The rise of genuine astronomical science with its knowledge of the immutability of the laws of celestial bodies made star-gazing forever absurd, while the knowledge that the liver is not the chief seat of thought or life dethroned that organ from its place of pre-eminence. No longer could these signs be used to determine what I was purposing to do on earth.

Modern theology—the mighty inheritor of man's past efforts in the spiritual quest—has completely outgrown divination. Messages sought in livers are as far removed from its present categories of thought as astrology is from astronomy or alchemy from chemistry. "It is in our human values that we find God revealed," concludes Professor John Baillie. "Not in the procession of the stars, not in the flight of birds, not in the guttural frenzy of the Delphic maid, but in 'the milk of human kindness' is the character of God made plain and His will made known. Not in the sound of thunder but in the voice of conscience do we hear Him speak most plainly. Not in hepatoscopic markings, nor yet on tables of stone, but on the tables of the human heart, are His words most plainly to be deciphered. As it has been finely put, 'God speaks to us through ourselves. It is through our values and obedience to them that we attain to knowledge of Him' and 'He is to be seen in the light of a cottage window as well as in the sun or the stars.' "*

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*Baillie: *Interpretation of Religion*, p. 460, New York, 1929.

WHAT MEN CALL "THE WRATH OF GOD"

"People have projected their own horrible thoughts, feelings, revenges, cruelties, against the sky, and have mistaken the images of their own barbarity for God."

The idea of divine anger is as old as man's fear of the unseen. Living in constant dread of his daily environment, with winds blowing and mountains howling with wild animals, it is no wonder that he concluded that nature is dark and hostile. Natural processes that scientific men now know are regulated by the laws of cause and effect were once looked upon as My special "acts" designed to favor or punish.

Divine wrath has long been an essential doctrine of all religions. It was an integral part of the theology of the ancient Hebrews, who never tired picturing Me as a deity that could easily be angered:

> And the people were as murmurers, speaking evil in the ears of the Lord; and when the Lord heard it, His anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and devoured them that were in the uttermost part of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and Moses prayed unto the Lord, and the fire abated.*

With such a flaming temper at My command it was believed that I used it not only against disobedience but also against ingratitude, idolatry, rebellion, and disregard for holy things. "Who can stand before His wrath?" declared the prophet Nahum. "Who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire and the rocks are thrown down by Him."*

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*Numbers 11:1-3.

Touched by the same theology Jeremiah pictured Me offering to the nations a wine-cup of foaming wrath to drink thereof and grow mad. From the same chalice a writer in the Psalms poured out the notion that "God as a righteous judge is angry every day."†

Fortunately for their own mental comfort and peace of mind the Hebrews did not allow this primitive notion of divine anger to go unchallenged. From the very earliest times there existed an opposite tradition: that I was also a God of mercy and lovingkindness. If Nahum could declare, "The Lord revengeth and is furious," Isaiah could contradict him by saying in My Name, "Fury is not in Me." With the passage of time the more advanced teachers realized the incongruity of ascribing fits of passion to My divinity. As soon as the rabbis hit upon the allegorical process they pressed it into the service of their theology and by clever casuistry were able to purge ancestral ideas from those baser features which tended to clog the progress of religion.

*Nahum 1:6. †Jeremiah 25:15 f.; Psalms 7:12.

While the rabbis were laboring to soften the harsher conceptions of the old Hebrew doctrines a Christian apologist by the name of Lactantius sat down to write a defense against the Epicureans and Stoics. His tract *On the Anger of God* drew a distinction between righteous and unrighteous anger, insisting that the former is as essential to My character as love and mercy and that without it I would not be God. "If God is not angry with the impious and unjust, it is clear that He does not love the pious and the just." "Neither can any honor be due to God, if He bestows nothing on him who worships; nor any fear, if He is not angry with him who does not worship."

In setting forth his views Lactantius not only convinced the mind of his own century but he swayed the theology of succeeding generations for almost fifteen hundred years. Each age added its own gruesome details. Theologians during the Middle Ages seemed to delight in picturing a divine Day of Wrath or a divine torture of sinners in Hell, or a divine destruction of heretics together with a divine damnation of unbelievers. It was out of this anger theology that Dante wrote the *Inferno.*

From this same arsenal of hot thought Jonathan Edwards developed his thunderous sermons, particularly that masterpiece of Calvinistic theology which he entitled *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry*

God. Starting out with the thought that "There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God," Edwards spoke of sinners as being the direct objects of that very same divine anger and wrath that is expressed in the torments of hell:

> And the reason why they do not go down to hell at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as angry, as He is with many of the miserable creatures that He is now tormenting in hell, and do there feel and hear the fierceness of His wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth; yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, that, it may be, are at ease and quiet, than He is with many of those that are now in the flames of hell. . . .
>
> The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over a fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked. . . .
>
> O sinner! consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell. . . .
>
> And it would be no wonder if some persons, that now sit here in some seats of this meeting-house in health, and quiet and secure, should be there before to-morrow morning.

Closely associated with the theological notion of anger—strange as that may seem—is the story of astronomy. Mediæval theology, inheriting a mass of beliefs from the ancient world, entertained the idea that all celestial phenomena, particularly comets, meteors, and eclipses, were sent as warnings by Me in order to scare the world. During the fifteenth century a comet made its appearance at the time when the Turks were fighting the Christians. In keeping with mediæval ideas Pope Calixtus III decreed several days of prayer, for averting My divine anger: "From the Turk and the comet, good Lord, deliver us!"—so ran the litany.

Nor were the Protestants any more advanced. "Whatever moves in the heaven in an unusual way is certainly a sign of God's wrath," declared Martin Luther in summing up the age-long belief of his fellow religionists. Steadfastly adhering to the faith once delivered to their saints, the Scottish church announced comets to be fiery tokens of My wrath: "Prodigies of great judgment on these lands for our sins, for never was the Lord more provoked by a people."

Shortly after the astronomical discovery of Tycho Brahe, Professor Gerard Vossius of the University of Leyden issued a statement quite characteristic of the thought of the sixteenth century:

> The history of all times shows comets to be messengers of misfortune. It does not follow that they are endowed with intelligence, but that there is a deity who makes use of them to call the human race to repentance.

Just as comets were believed to be fire-balls flung from My angry hands, so eclipses were equally ominous as tokens of some terrible trouble about to happen. It was claimed in England that an eclipse portended the execution of Charles I. In America Increase Mather—the New England divine who preached a sermon on *Heaven's Alarm to the World*—cited this type of celestial phenomenon as evidence of My grief at the death of President Chauncey of Harvard College.

Notwithstanding this deeply-intrenched belief in comets the Reverend Dr. J. Gresham Machen of Princeton University recently took a very bold step away from the old-time orthodoxy when he made public the following religio-astronomical observation:

> When I viewed the spectacle of the total eclipse of the sun at New Haven on the twenty-fourth of January, 1925, I was confirmed in my theism. Such phenomena make us conscious of the wonderful mechanism of the universe, as we ought to be conscious of it every day; at such moments anything like materialism seems to be but a very pitiful and very unreasonable thing. I am no astronomer, but of one thing I was certain: when the strange, slow-moving shadow was gone, and the world was bathed again in the wholesome light of day, I knew that the sun, despite its vastness, was made for us personal beings and not we for the sun, and that it was made for us personal beings by the living God.*

While there will doubtless be many who will smile at Dr. Machen's naïve homocentric thought that he

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**My Idea of God* (edited by J. Fort Newton), p. 45, Boston, 1926.

"knew" that the sun "was made for us personal beings and not we for the sun" it is nevertheless very encouraging (particularly from the standpoint of this biography) to witness a theologian who dares to look beyond the back yard of the traditional theology of his forebears. Whereas his ancestors fled into their churches at the approach of an eclipse and solemnly turned their frightened faces from so horrible a sight, Dr. Machen, apparently without the least sign of nervousness, "viewed the spectacle."

LIKE PEOPLE, LIKE GOD

Each nation has reflected on Me elements of its own dominant traits including petty tempers and a medley of bad humors. What must undoubtedly be repugnant to the modern man is the large amount of positive evil that has been ascribed to Divinity by this type of anthropomorphism. In some minds I have been held as a fine creation, in other minds I have been degraded to a stupid or malicious demon —in all minds My character has varied with the character of men. Like people, like God.

Ideas that have narrowed and debased human personality were made to narrow and debase the divine ideal. Even vices and crimes were abundantly justified, not because vices are more easily copied than virtues but because it was believed that the creation of both good and evil must be assigned to Omnipotence. Thus, in order to avoid the danger of a belief in two gods (dualism), the ancient Hebrews made Me the author of both good and evil—consequently, My portrait as presented in the records of the Old Testament leaves much to be desired.

Even at its very best, the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, as recorded in the Book of Genesis, belongs to a very low level of religious thinking. To be sure, it has elements of good wrapped up within it inasmuch as it was written as a protest against human sacrifice. Nevertheless, it presents Me as a tempter who, in order to test Abraham's obedience, does not hesitate to employ a very cruel method.

Equally offensive to higher ethical ideas is that story told in the twenty-second chapter of the First Book of Kings where it is said that I sent one of my own messengers in the form of a lying spirit to induce King Ahab to go up against Ramoth-gilead. (Note, for example, in the following quotation how I am pictured with the characteristics of a petty Oriental monarch using his powers for evil counsel.)

> I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left. And the Lord said: Who shall entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said: On this manner; and another said: On that manner. And there came forth the spirit, and stood before the Lord and said: I will entice him. And the Lord said unto him: Wherewith? And he said: I will go forth and be a lying spirit in

the mouth of all his prophets. And He said: Thou shalt entice him, and shalt prevail also; go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets; and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.*

There is no denying that there are many problems that baffle human life and many inexplicable happenings that befall even innocent men and women. It will take centuries of further study for the philosophers to arrive at the frontiers of a true solution of these un-understood mysteries of existence. By this time, however, the more spiritual leaders of the race know pretty well that no solution lies in picturing Me as the deliberate originator of schemes to hurt or harm. That approach leads only to madness. Many centuries ago Plato did not hesitate to pass severe judgment on the immoralities of all legends that present Divinity as the direct inspirer of evil. And against the doctrine that man is tempted by Me, the protest of St. James has already been noted.†

It is a splendid tribute to the intelligent conscience of mankind that all such ideas as are incompatible with a high ethical code are being dropped from current conceptions of Divinity. With the rise of scientific ways of thinking and modern refinements in

*There is almost an exact parallel to this story in the second book of the *Iliad*, where Zeus causes Agamemnon to be deceived by a lying dream.

†James 1 : 13. As a good example of ethical differences in the Old Testament compare a verse like "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth" (Ezekiel 18 :32), with the statement "Because the Lord was pleased to slay them" (I Samuel 2 : 25).

honesty men are determined to discard useless ballast. For that reason the process of expurgation is now being greatly accelerated. (More change has come over theology in the last twenty-five years than during the previous twenty-five centuries.) That such a development is not without its tremendous difficulties may be judged from the words of the late George Burman Foster:

> To turn slowly away, step by step, from theologies which one has cherished, which were vital and are vital to friends past and present, to feel that these theologies are now but the skeletons of religion, this cannot be done without mental anguish. And with all his "enlightenment" there are times when the modern man must long to hear even old Triton blow his wreathed horn or for the stately dogmatic mansion which the souls of the fathers built. Still, as a tortoise cannot dwell in the dry shell which its father shed, but must grow a shell of its own—so must we!*

There are many ideas as old and hallowed as the human race itself; consequently, it is not easy to get vast masses of men to think in advanced terms. (And it is also for that reason that religion is the stronghold of conservatism.) However, each age has its Fosters! Even the ancient rabbis did not hesitate to criticise severely every primitive notion that proved itself plainly offensive to men of culture. And if the rabbis did not always openly criticise they managed

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*G. B. Foster: *The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence*, p. 134, Chicago, 1909.

to explain away cleverly the crudities that annoyed them—either by allegory or by finely spun philosophical arguments.

With the decay of the older ways of thinking a vast transformation has overtaken the mind of man toward Me—a transformation worthy of the satisfactions of this biography. Everywhere there is a sense of release from the thought-patterns of the past. No longer do competent theologians seek to inject life where none exists. Dead ideas are being acknowledged as dead; and so into the museums these lifeless forms are being reverently carried, there to be deposited as a token of respect to the intellectual struggles of former generations.

And so it comes to pass that whereas the theological conceptions of the twentieth century are no longer those of the Dark Ages, the change may be attributed to this inescapable anthropomorphism: Like people, like God.

BOOK III

MUNDANE AFFAIRS

BOOK III

MUNDANE AFFAIRS

THE WIDENING HORIZON

MAN's idea of Me is co-ordinate with stages of his civilization and culture—that is why My biography cannot be fully understood apart from the various steps of humanity's economic and social development.

In the tribal stage of civilization men had tribal ideas about Me. Among the Semitic peoples, such as the Hebrews and the Arabs, the clan was the social unit. Each clan had its own god. Originally under the name of the Hebrew clan-god, Yahweh, I was regarded as the exclusive possessor of but one tribe; in time, however, I became the recognized and sole deity of the united groups of Israelites. I underwent a similar evolution among the Arabs. Originally, the term Allah was applied to Me as the petty patron deity of Mohammed's own tribe—eventually it became My name as the *only* God of all the Arabians.

In this early clan stage of civilization, religion was very exclusive because the outlook of early man was limited to a very small region. Each clan considered its own conception of Me as its own peculiar possession. As the guardian deity of the tribe, I was assigned complete jurisdiction over the tribal territory, to guard it against enemies and to punish those who violated the time-honored customs and traditions.

Looking back over the past, it can be readily understood that the tribal conception of Me was limited in two directions: by the size of the clan and by the size of the clan's territory. In ancient Egypt, the nomes or little principalities, each with its central town and its prince, had a chief god. Under such titles as "He of Edfu" I was designated by the names of the principalities to which I was supposed to have had an exclusive attachment. As time went on, these little principalities began to become more closely associated with each other, and then, of course, I got beyond the borders. Concomitantly with the expansion of Egyptian territory there arose in the Egyptian mind a wider horizon of My sphere of influence.

Everywhere, throughout antiquity, religion was held together by the rigid bonds of a three-fold union: the clan, its territory and its god. Among the Hebrews who called Me Yahweh I was regarded as belonging solely to them and limited to their little strip of highland country in the heart of Palestine. Mount Sinai was believed to be My special abode and I was closely associated with the lightnings and thunders that anciently played about its peaks. In the biblical story of Naaman, the Assyrian military leader, it is told how he carried away a small portion of the soil of Palestine in order to be able to worship Me as Yahweh in far-off Syria. Thus, under the name of Yahweh I was looked upon as the exclusive "Lord" of the Hebrew country, whose effectiveness ended at the frontiers.

As tribes merged with each other, there slowly grew up a new type of organization: the nation. With the gradual disappearance of the smaller units there came a widening of the spiritual horizon. Slowly, very slowly, I began to shed those elements of clannish exclusiveness in which men had for so many centuries narrowed their conception of Me.

When one stops to think of the dangers and sufferings which were associated with the names of Egypt and Assyria in the heart of the ancient Hebrews, crushed as they were between these two military powers, it is nothing short of the sublime that Isaiah should prophesy an era of mutual understanding and good-will, a day in which the "Egyptians and Assyrians alike will worship the Eternal":

> In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that the Lord of hosts hath blessed him, saying: "Blessed be Egypt My people and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance."*

Thus, from a jealous God reflecting the grim hard-ness of the early Hebrew temperament I was being conceived even in that far-off age in more lovable forms. . . . Instead of cruelty and pitilessness toward aliens (a reflex of the old Hebrew ferocity) it began to dawn upon the ancient Jewish mind that I have an interest in all peoples.

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*Isaiah 19:25.

BEYOND PALESTINE

As Hebrew civilization became less tribal the ideals of the people underwent profound changes which in turn brought on changed conceptions of Me.

Until the days of the Babylonian exile I remained in the Jewish mind little more than a provincial deity. But a new world was born in the pangs of that mighty national upheaval (586 B. C.)—and so by means of foreign residence, colonial settlements, and diplomatic relations with alien peoples the idea emerged among the Hebrews that I was not only the God of other lands but also the one and only God of the whole world.

But even before the Exile it began faintly to dawn upon the ancient Hebrews that the old Yahweh-ideas about Me, as limited to Israel's exclusive possession and having no interests outside of Palestine, were altogether too inadequate. Of course, the Jews always regarded themselves as My own particular people—never for one moment did they doubt that!

—but as their contacts with the world enlarged they could not escape the growing conviction that in a very true sense I was the God of all the earth. Every historian now knows that while the Exile enslaved the people it freed their old Yahweh-conceptions. Getting beyond Palestine, I "became a God without bounds and therefore without bonds."

It was the Hebrew prophets that carried to their fellow men the dawnlight principles of this new universalistic outlook and for that reason they deserve a place of exceptional recognition in My biography. While they were pre-eminently men of their own times they succeeded in framing a message for all times. With superb courage they challenged the tribalistic notions of their fellow Hebrews. And though race continued to count for much—as it does even now—still righteousness came to be counted for more. Starting out as the jealous Lord of Israel's hosts, I underwent in the minds of these men an amazingly interesting evolution until I was regarded as the God of all righteousness. They were the first to see that what is good for a man as an individual is good for another man, until by implication their thought of Me as the *One* and *Only* God began to claim the allegiance of all men everywhere. Against centuries of ingrained narrow particularism, the Unknown Prophet (sometimes called Second Isaiah) presented his expression of universalism at a time when the Hebrews were battling for existence against hereditary enemies. From this same school of prophets comes that quaint piece of oriental fiction called *The Book of Jonah*—a parable connected with the name of an ancient prophet—which voices in My Name a mighty protest against narrow-mindedness and intolerance.

For many reasons, the discussion of which would be entirely too far remote from the immediate concerns of this biography, the Hebrews were unable to carry out to the last consequences the universalism of their great leaders. A complex interaction of social, political and economic causes stopped short the flow of the prophetic stream; and later on, when the fierce fires of persecution and revolution scorched their little country, the pristine waters were quickly dried up in the flames. Like a rivulet struggling in the hot sands of the desert the prophetic idealism of the masters sank out of sight and vanished from the surface of Hebraic life. A spirit of reaction now set in: as universalistic as the prophets were, so narrow had their children developed. . . . However, all was not lost. . . . In time their spirit came to animate the missionary activities of both Christianity and Mohammedanism. That others have been capable of reaching these higher flights is indicative of the basic soundness of the Prophetic point of view.

Yet in all fairness to the old Hebrew spirit, it ought never to be forgotten that it was a Jew who—in the name of another Jew—fought the greatest battle against exclusiveness. In "the new man," wrote Paul of Tarsus, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free. . . ."

HOW MEN HAVE PERSECUTED IN MY NAME

The moment men come to believe in a book as containing a direct revelation from Me, is the moment they begin to persecute. It is notorious that those religions that have insisted the most on the divine nature of their own particular bible have been the greatest users of the sword. Much of this evil has been done in My Name and that is why My biography must take cognizance of it. In reality, My Name has merely been used as a helpful subterfuge; the more pressing reasons have always been economic and social (with religion coming in to bolster things up).

It cannot be said too emphatically that I have never had anything to do with persecution—the whole ugly affair has been man-made. Yet it is curious how theologians have persisted in dragging Me into this horrible mess. For example, there is the story of the Inquisition. It was a ghastly thing from beginning to end, supported with incredible audacity because it was believed that I demanded it. In the midst of it all a Spanish priest by the name of Paramo published a book in which he actually developed the brutal idea that I intended the Inquisition to be the central fact in human history.*

This is how he developed his thesis.

Paramo took that mythical story in Genesis about the first man and claimed that I, in the case of Adam, instituted the Inquisition; for the call "Adam, where art thou?" was a formal summons to the accused. Then, declared Paramo, I made Adam appear before My tribunal of justice in order to be duly interrogated. Adam, on being charged with sin, accused Eve. Eve in turn accused the serpent (but being a mere reptile the serpent of course was incapable of repentance). Upon his own admission Adam was condemned on seven counts: pride, immoderate love of his wife, unbelief, curiosity, particular disobedience, false excusation, and wrong-doing.

With a diabolical use of allegory the clever Paramo showed that the Inquisition need only follow a procedure already laid down by Me in the Holy Bible. Like Me, the inquisitors must cite the accused and bring them to court. To be sure, the defendants will try to give many excuses but that in itself is a sign of guilt. In the end the guilty will be forced to confess. Then the holy inquisitor, following My example,

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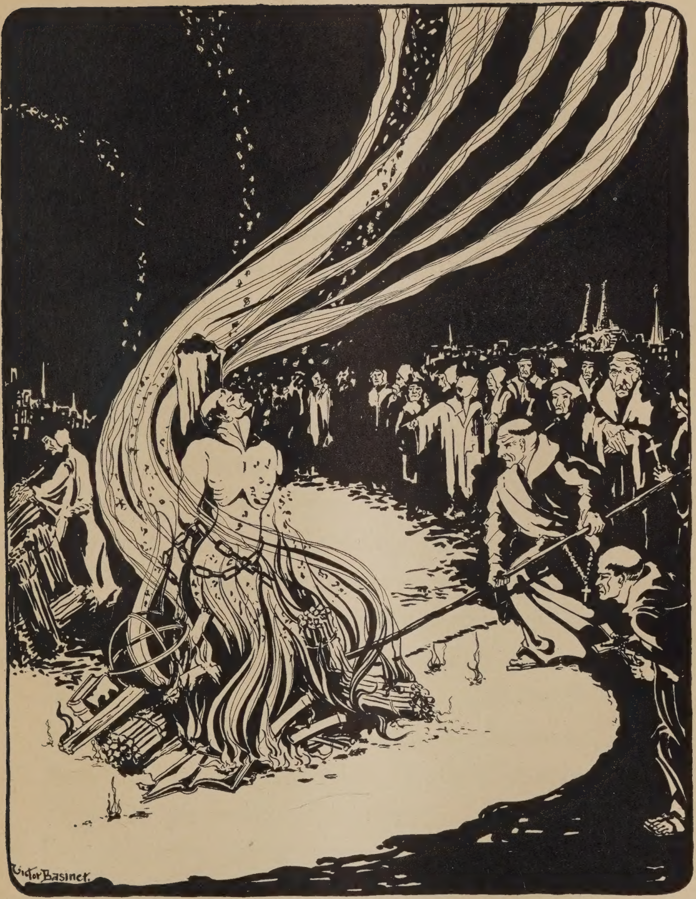
*Paramo: *De Origine et Progressu Officii Sanctæ Inquisitionis*, Madrid, 1598.


Victor Basinet.

PERSECUTION IN MY NAME

Paramo showed that the Inquisition need only follow a procedure already laid down by Me in the Holy Bible.

will render judgment. ("And as God judges alone without angels, so the inquisitors must hold their court in secret!") Finally, as I expelled Adam and Eve out of Paradise, so the inquisitors have the right, aye they are bidden, to confiscate the goods of heretics.

Long before the Inquisition the ancient Greeks punished dissent as an offense against the state. On occasion they also knew how to drag Me in. In one of the densely populated suburbs of Athens a priest by the name of Diopheites was sufficiently strong in politics to get a law passed which demanded "the immediate prosecution of all those who disbelieved in the established religion or held theories of their own about certain divine things." Under this law one of the greatest minds of antiquity was made to suffer. But the Greeks soon forgot Diopheites who framed this early law of suppression and they long remembered its victim, Anaxagoras, who specialized in astronomy and among other things taught them to believe that the sun was not a heavenly chariot daily driven by Me through the skies.

In this same city of Athens Socrates argued before his accusers that no person on earth has the right to tell another man what he should believe or to deprive him of the right to think as he pleases. Those who took a leading part in the trial could not understand such radicalism. There were many persons in

Athens who could neither read nor write. Out of this class there came that honorable grain merchant who, ignorant of most things, was loudest in his accusations "because he knew all about the will of the gods."

And curiously enough, though Plato was the pupil of Socrates he caught none of his master's passion for tolerance. In fact, Plato's language does not differ greatly from Paramo's. Outlining his ideal republic, the philosopher prescribed punishment for departures, in no uncertain terms:

> Let this then be the law: No one shall possess shrines of the gods in private houses, and he who is found to possess them, and perform any sacred rites not publicly authorized, shall be informed against to the guardians of the law; and let them issue orders that he shall carry his private rites to the public temples, and if he do not obey, let them inflict a penalty until he comply. And if a person be proven guilty of impiety, not merely from childish levity, but such as a grown-up man may be guilty of, let him be punished with death.*

In the Mohammedan bible, the Koran, one may find uttered in My name many passages full of bitter invective against unbelievers and opponents. Here, for example, in Surah III is a "revelation" directed by the fiery prophet of Arabia against one of his uncles, who was his enemy:

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*Plato, *Laws*, 908–10. Jowett's translation.

> In the name of the merciful and compassionate God, Abu Laheb's two hands shall perish, and he shall perish. His wealth shall not avail him, nor what he has earned! He shall broil in a fire that flames, and his wife carrying faggots!—on her neck a cord of palm fibres.

About a thousand years after Mohammed penned these words the Jewish community of Amsterdam condemned the twenty-three-year-old Spinoza. An excommunication service was held in the synagogue which was draped in black, and the following curse (dragging Me in) was solemnly pronounced on one of the greatest minds of history:

> Let him be accursed by day, and accursed by night; let him be accursed in his lying down, and accursed in his rising up; accursed in going out and accursed in coming in. May the Lord never pardon or acknowledge him; may the wrath and displeasure of the Lord burn henceforth against this man. . . .

It would be almost a kind of sacrilege to pile one evidence on top of the other, of man's inhumanity to man, cruelly executed in My Name. Perhaps it would leave one with a despair born of a disproportionate emphasis to carry this too far. . . .

Of course, man has managed to make feeble restitution. He has had to turn his mind almost upside down to do it. But in some cases it has been accomplished. Socrates, Jesus, Spinoza, Bruno—and a host of similar mighty souls—were all condemned for the sin of atheism or blasphemy or both. To-day, humanity speaks of them as heroes—"God-intoxicated men"—and with belated reverence builds monuments to perpetuate their memory.

TOLERANCE AND INTOLERANCE

Nothing was farther from the mind of Jesus than persecution. There are instances on record of deliberate twistings of his teachings in order to justify the use of violence, but these are the inventions of his followers.

In the ninth chapter of the Gospel of Luke a story is told how Jesus on passing through a Samaritan village was brusquely refused hospitality. The incident created an immediate resentment on the part of the disciples, for they felt that the Samaritan refusal was an outrageous insult:

> When his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them? But he turned and rebuked them. And they went to another village.

Thus Jesus not only repudiated the suggestion of violence but he strongly rebuked the spirit that prompted it, deeming it quite unnecessary to punish those who refused to receive him. He did what any sensible man would have done under similar conditions: he "went to another village."

Despite the unmistakable clearness of this story

Paramo used it to prove the right of the Inquisition to employ violence! With deliberate distortion he declared: "Our Lord, passing through Galilee and the midst of Samaria, sends messengers into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him. The Samaritans did not receive Him, and James and John were of opinion that they should be punished by fire from heaven. Here is the punishment of heretics, namely, fire; for the Samaritans were the heretics of that age."

No people arrives suddenly or overnight from tolerance to intolerance. The ferocity of the mediæval temper as exhibited in a man like Paramo dates back to the days of the Roman empire when Christianity was struggling to gain a foothold. In the contest between the old paganism and the new faith there was developed an antagonism of serious bitterness toward all who professed the ancient ways of thinking. Originally, the word "heretic" had little of the sinister meaning that was later attached to it. But it was gradually melted down into a fanatical weapon which, according to the contemporary language of orthodox theology, was used to designate any doctrine held to be "unsound, false, and eternally wrong."

As masters of a far-flung polyglot empire the Romans insisted upon religious tolerance for all the various peoples and multitudinous beliefs within their wide domains. This was no mean achievement. As long as the necessary taxes were paid and law and order enforced according to civilized standards no attempt was made to disturb people's beliefs. Granting this large degree of liberty to believe or disbelieve, it was possible for a man to worship without interference from his neighbor. From time to time, however, men engaged in religious quarrels and rushed to the courts for relief. But it was the policy of the Roman magistrates not to fight the battles of divinity. "For," as the Emperor Tiberius very shrewdly remarked, "if the Gods think that they have just claims for grievance, they can surely take care of themselves."

It was inevitable that the narrow point of view of the new faith was bound to create an endless amount of intolerance and ill-will. The Roman tradition was utterly at variance with any such policy of religious bitterness. "Why," complained the patriot Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, "should we Pagans and our Christian neighbors not live in peace and harmony? We look up to the same stars, we are fellow passengers on the same planet and dwell beneath the same sky. What matters it along which road each individual endeavors to find the ultimate truth? The riddle of existence is too great that there should be only one path leading to an answer."

These were fine words but they fell on deaf ears, for the temper of the age moved in an altogether different direction. Not only were Christians incapable of understanding the spirit of Roman tolerance for religious beliefs, they were equally incapable of being tolerant toward each other. During the reign of Emperor Valens a bitter fight broke out between his orthodox and non-orthodox subjects. Under the stress of these events the pagan philosopher Themistius addressed the following sensible words to the king:

> There is a domain over which no ruler can hope to exercise any authority. That is the domain of the virtues and especially that of the religious beliefs of individuals. Compulsion within that field causes hypocrisy and conversions that are based upon fraud. Hence it is much better for a ruler to tolerate all beliefs, since it is only by toleration that civic strife can be averted. Moreover, toleration is a divine law. God himself has most clearly demonstrated His desire for a number of different religions. And God alone can judge the methods by which humanity aspires to come to an understanding of the Divine Mystery. God delights in the variety of homage which is rendered to Him. He likes Christians to use certain rites, the Greeks others, the Egyptians again others. . . .

It was a long night of bitter horrors that mediæval men had to go through before the spirit of tolerance began to find new expression on the soil of Europe. And even then it was extremely wobbly. The same Luther who could proclaim that it was "against the Holy Spirit to burn heretics" did not hesitate to urge his followers to slaughter those who resisted his policies. In the desperate conflicts that arose during the centuries of the Reformation men frequently lost all sense of proportion. The one thing uppermost in their minds was to state "true" doctrine. As each sect believed itself in sole possession of eternal truth the outcome was a flood of confessions, creeds, articles of faith, and hosts of catechisms.

Amidst all the arrogance of the creedmakers, who professed to speak in My Name, there was a singular exception in the person of Faustus Socinus.

An Italian by birth, Socinus had travelled widely throughout Europe and was therefore acquainted with all the sects and their petty bigotries. Being an intelligent observer he could not help seeing through this tragedy of sorrows and comedy of errors. Dissatisfied with all the extant catechisms he sat down to frame an altogether different kind of a document, one that would give concrete expression to the needed virtue of the hour: tolerance.

With this desire to end sectarian strife the "Catechism of Rakow" made its appearance. It did not start off like the other catechisms with an assumption of setting forth infallible truth. No claim was made that I conferred upon its author supernatural guidance. Socinus was a modest man. Being spiritually honest he contented himself with the following appeal:

> Let each one be free to judge of his own religion, for this is the rule set forth by the New Testament and by the example of the earliest church. Who are we, miserable people, that we would smother and extinguish in others the fire of divine spirit which God has kindled in them? Have any of us a monopoly of the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures?

Shortly after the publication of the Racovian Catechism the Puritans were on their way to America, untouched by the spirit of Socinus. Swaddled as they were in the grave-clothes of creed and custom, they carried over into the New World the intolerance of the Old. They had no intention of emphasizing the doctrine of My fatherhood toward all men, for they fancied themselves to be My "elect," especially chosen to tell their fellow creatures the nature of My will on earth (which consisted chiefly in divine wrath toward unbelievers).

A truly representative Puritan was Governor Dudley. Being one of the most eminent of the settlers of New England, he was considered a saint of exemplary piety. In answer to a reply from Holland as to whether "those that differed from you in opinion, yet holding the same foundation in religion, might be permitted to live among you" Governor Dudley replied according to his honest conviction: "God forbid, our love to the truth should be grown so cold that we should tolerate errors. . . ." In this spirit he carried on his work, and in this spirit he died—

for shortly after he closed his eyes the following lines were found in his pocket:

> "Let men of God in courts and churches watch
> O'er such as do a toleration hatch,
> Lest that ill egg bring forth a cockatrice
> To poison all with heresy and vice."*

Unfortunately the spirit of Paramo, Calvin, and Dudley has not disappeared. With all the boasted progress of the twentieth century, humanity still nurses its neolithic animosities. The observation that men have just enough religion to hate their neighbors but not quite enough to love them seems to be as true now as when Jonathan Swift first declared it.

It is this same anachronism that has recently distressed the soul of Rabindranath Tagore:

> "While God waits
> For His temple to be built of love
> Men bring stones."†

SLAVERY

Since its origin in dim antiquity slavery has never lacked its whole-hearted champions who, until comparatively recent times, have defended it as an in-

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*Quoted in Henry Southwick's Old South Prize Essay entitled: *The Policy of the Early Colonists toward Quakers and Others*, p. 3, Boston, 1885.

†Tagore: *Fireflies*, p. 49, New York, 1928.

stitution blessed by Me and hallowed by special revelations of My divine approval.

It is altogether outside the scope of this biography to trace the causes of human bondage or even to point out its early beneficial aspect as a humane substitute for brutal slaughter in times of war. Neither will it be necessary to consider here its manifold relationships with law and economics, as interesting and helpful as all these ramifications are to a full understanding of the subject. Only as slavery was upheld by theology and sanctioned in My name does the system come within the thought of these pages.

At the very threshold of civilization slavery is met. Having been so intimately bound up with ancient society it is no wonder that the nations of antiquity were unable to escape it. Even the Hebrews, although they had suffered bitterly under the taskmaster's whip, could not get beyond its influence. Once out of Egypt, they provided for themselves slave legislation in no uncertain terms. This was altogether natural, since slavery arises whenever a society passes from a roving, nomadic stage to a settled agricultural basis (and there it continues until further development makes possible an advance to higher levels).

Because Hebrew life was so closely shaped around a theocratic conception of government, in which I was regarded as the supreme despot, the Mosaic laws are of unique importance in this connection. They not only influenced the Israelites over the long period of their own social evolution but they became the very foundation of that vast theological support upon which, down to the middle of the nineteenth century, the Western world justified slavery.

As an important element in the society of the ancient Jews slavery possessed a public, fundamental character. Yet of all the peoples of antiquity the Israelites were about the most humane. Though slaves ranked as the property of their masters they were carefully safeguarded by legislation and custom. Notwithstanding all the kindness shown to them they were still considered "property." So deeply had this concept been intrenched in the Mosaic fabric that it made its way into the Ten Commandments, where one may still find the ancient injunction not to covet a neighbor's "man-servant" nor "maid-servant"—for being regarded as property it would be a sin to covet them.

In the Book of Exodus there is an old piece of legislation that tells the nature of the quaint religious ceremony that a Hebrew slave must undergo should he desire perpetual bondage. It also tells how his master must bring the slave unto Me:

> If thou buy an Hebrew servant (or bondman) six years he shall serve; and in the seventh he shall go out free for

> nothing. If he come in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he be married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master give him a wife and she bear him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's and he shall go out by himself. But if thy servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife and my children: I will not go out free; then his master shall bring him to God, and shall bring him unto the door, or unto the doorpost; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.*

As Jewish society progressed, legislation became more humane, but never at any time did it escape the clan psychology which always recognized a difference between Hebrew bondmen and Gentiles. The Prophets stormed against the enslavement of Hebrews *by Hebrews.* It was their doctrine that inasmuch as all Jews are brothers it was morally wrong for an Israelite to put his fellow brother in captivity. "Every man," declared Jeremiah, "should let his man-slave, and every man his woman-slave, *that is a Hebrew or a Hebrewess,* go free; that none should make bondmen of them—of a Jew his brother."† Yet these same Prophets did not consider it wrong for their countrymen to hold slaves from other nations nor did it ever occur to them to discuss slavery in the abstract.

With the rise of Christianity in the West and Mohammedanism in the East, slavery did not get very far beyond the old clan psychology of the Hebrews. On the whole, Christians held that it was morally wrong (but legally justifiable) for members of their own faith to be enslaved, just as the Hebrews regarded it as debasing to one who belonged to the chosen race. The Popes considered it an outrage that Jews be permitted to buy and sell Christians but they smiled at the protest of the Caliphs who were equally outraged at the plight of the Mohammedans.

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*Exodus 21 : 2–6.

†Jeremiah 34 : 8–9.

Back of the various social and economic reasons a strong theological support was given to slavery. St. John Chrysostom, an early Church Father of the fourth century who was known for his kindness, declared that all men were originally created perfect and equal but by the Fall of Adam man lost the power of self-government and slipped headlong into a threefold bondage: the bondage of woman under man, of slave under master, of subject under ruler. Thus slavery, occasioned by the Fall, was really a divine arrangement to be escaped only as one might escape sin or death. When it is remembered that of all the theologians of his age Chrysostom was perhaps the most liberal on the subject of slavery it can easily be seen what a secure hold the institution of bondage had upon Christianity. Even the Popes, while claiming to be My viceroy on earth, did not hesitate to sell slaves to convents, in glaring inconsistency with the professed principle of brotherhood in Christ.

The entire abolition of slavery was neither demanded by the Gospels nor desired by the Church. Few of the Popes ever declared human bondage incompatible with Christianity. The decrees of the Councils sought to palliate and compromise with the evil rather than oppose it. Living in an age of wars and vast social confusions the Church was naturally conservative. She therefore deemed it wisely sufficient to do just what the old Hebraic codes had done: insist upon kind treatment from masters and enjoin upon slaves the virtue of obedience "for the sake of the Lord." In this spirit the Council of Gangra threatened any one who dared to use religion as a pretext to throw masters into contempt. "The fact that slavery, tempered with many humane restrictions, was permitted under the Mosaic law would have sufficed to prevent the institution from being condemned by Christian teachers as absolutely immoral. They, following the example of St. Paul, implicitly accept slavery as not in itself incompatible with the Christian law."*

In opposition to the worldly and practical policies of the Church certain ethical tendencies were always at work in an effort to create something more than amelioration. Even the Papacy could not altogether

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**Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. XIV, p. 39, article on "Slavery."

ignore the compulsion of a message that frankly taught the spiritual equality of all men. Clement of Alexandria protested against unfair treatment and urged that "slaves are men like ourselves." Justin Martyr wept over the forgotten spirit of universal brotherhood embedded in the teachings of Christ. Although slavery was regarded as a legal right based on a moral wrong, still the slave had the same virtues and the same sins as other men and consequently he would have to share the same eternal punishments and heavenly rewards.

During the stormiest and darkest periods of the Middle Ages the thought of liberty was never permitted to die out entirely. As difficult as it was to escape the economic order, still, many men acted upon noble principles inspired by the highest teaching of the Church. There is the example of Chromaticus, a wealthy Roman who, after having embraced Christianity, emancipated fourteen hundred of his own slaves. By slow degrees this spirit of manumission, done as an act of religion, grew in favor. It became a custom for masters to bring their slaves to the altar and liberate them under the shadow of the cross. "For fear of Almighty God"—so ran one of these old formulas—"and for the cure of my soul I liberate thee." With such words the individual emancipation was accomplished.

With the slow passing of slavery into feudal serfdom it appeared that bondage was on the highroad to extinction. The Renaissance, having done so much for humanity in the field of science and discovery, curiously enough revived the slave-trade on a hitherto unprecedented scale. Portuguese, Spaniards, Englishmen, and lesser dealers engaged in sharp competition as they transported from one continent to another thousands of human beings.

In the United States slavery grew up as an integral part of the British colonial system, and while there were loud protests from abolitionists in all parts of the country, still, it must be remembered, that in the ten years before the Civil War slavery was more strongly intrenched in the South than it had ever been. By the very act of secession the Confederate States proposed to erect themselves into a slave Power.

What had contemporary theology to say to this momentous question?

The slave-holding South, having managed to get the Church on its side, declared that I had ordained the institution of bondage from the time of Noah; therefore, to dispute its divine character was nothing short of blasphemy against My designs. In a public meeting in South Carolina held in 1836 the Reverend J. C. Postell voiced the theology of the day:

> It is not a moral evil. The fact that slavery is of Divine appointment would be proof enough, with the Christian,

> that it could not be a moral evil. But when we view the hordes of savage marauders and human cannibals enslaved to lust and passion, and abandoned to idolatry and ignorance, to revolutionize them from such a state, and enslave them where they may have the gospel, and the privileges of Christians, so far from being a moral evil, it is a merciful visitation. If slavery was either the invention of man or a moral evil, it is logical to conclude, the power to create has the power to destroy. Why, then, has it existed? And why does it now exist amidst all the power of legislation in state and church, and the clamor of abolitionists? It is the Lord's doings, and marvellous in our eyes, and had it not been done for the best, God alone, who is able, long since would have overruled it. It is by Divine appointment.*

Within less than half a century after the death of Lincoln the old South outgrew its slave theology. To-day, no orthodoxy within its borders seeks to establish the right of bondage from Bible texts. Such a perverted theory is utterly gone. Slavery—a purely human arrangement—is now so completely understood as a man-made affair that no one continues to uphold it as a divine appointment blessed by Me.

But the collapse of the old-time slavery does not mean that humanity is yet free. Subtle forms of bondage threaten the race at every turn in the road of progress. Each shackle, called holy in My Name, is a travesty upon the sanctity of man's liberty. I am the God of the free. When man sufficiently

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*Quoted from the *American Churches the Bulwarks of American Slavery*, by James G. Birney, p. 22 (3d Am. ed.), Concord, N. H., 1885.

learns this lesson he will call no form of bondage divine.

PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Each religion in the course of its development has elaborated the idea that certain men, by reason of their high office within an ecclesiastical organization, are My personal representatives. Popes, high-priests, lamas, and caliphs have zealously perpetuated the belief that they stand in an altogether different relation to Me from the rest of mankind.

It is largely the monarchic conception of the government of the universe that has helped to shape this idea of special representatives. Once given the theory that I am the King of the universe, with executive offices up in heaven, it was the most natural thing for men to arrive at the corollary idea, namely: that the King must have His divinely commissioned officers down on earth who are at the same time His unimpeachably authoritative ministers.

It is this notion that rules the Papacy, for it is claimed that the Pope is commissioned by Me to deal with men as a plenipotentiary from the Court of Heaven. His voice is supposed to be tantamount to My voice. To resist his decrees is to resist Me. Salvation hangs upon obedience to him.

The theory of Gregory VII and his successors not only gave the Popes the rule of the whole Church but the control of the civil power. Making themselves responsible to no one on earth it was sufficient to tell the people that they would give an account to Me. "There is only one name in the world," declared Gregory, "and that is the Pope's. He only can use the ornaments of empire. All princes ought to kiss his feet. He alone can nominate and displace bishops, and assemble or dissolve Councils. Nobody can judge him. His mere election constitutes him a saint. He has never erred, and never shall err in time to come. He can depose Princes, and release subjects from their oaths of fidelity."

What the Popes assumed for themselves they carried out as far as they were able. At the last of the mediæval Councils, known as the Fifth Lateran, the theory of papal power as represented by the two swords was reasserted. (The Venetian, Marcello, addressed the reigning Pope Julius II as another God on earth—*alter deus in terris.*) It was through this power that the Roman Pontiffs humbled Europe. Weak and defenseless themselves, they made the mighty and warlike of earth bow in subjection to them. They forced the very princes to abdicate their thrones, removing them at pleasure. They commanded kings to stand barefoot, in the garb of humble penitents, before their doors, seeking their forgiveness, or condescendingly allowed them to wait on table or to hold the stirrups of their palfrey. With a single word: "Anathema!" they laid on whole peoples despair and death, and transformed fruitful lands into howling deserts.

By calling themselves My special representatives they were made lords of time as well as of space. They thrust man out of whatever earthly paradise he might inhabit, closed the gates of Heaven against him, cast him headlong into the abyss of Hell, and at their pleasure, drew him out again. They canonized certain mortals as saints, lifted them up among the elect of Heaven, and permitted them to work miracles in My Name for the glory of the Church. Thus they were the judges of the living and the dead, and ruled over both time and eternity.

But there came a period in the history of the Papacy when a very awkward situation developed. What is known as the Babylonian Captivity (1377–1417) was in reality a huge schism that tore the Church of Rome wide open. Instead of one pope there were now two, both claiming to be My personal representatives. At Avignon, the rival Popes hurled their anathemas against the occupants of the chair on the Tiber. These were returned in due time, compliment for compliment, curse for curse.

Of course all this was very embarrassing not only because it showed that the Popes were as passionate as other men but also because it seriously weakened the theological notion of special representation. To the mediæval mind one pope was perfectly reasonable but the presence on earth of two popes was an absurdity that reflected on My intelligence. What kind of a God is this?—so men asked themselves—who is unable to manage his own Church without a scandal?

Things went from bad to worse. Instead of two popes there were now three, for the Council of Pisa, 1409, deposed the rival Popes in Rome and Avignon as "notorious heretics and schismatics, offenders against the unity of the church," and elected in their stead Alexander V. In this way Christendom witnessed the spectacle of three pontiffs, each claiming to be My special representative.

With the newly awakened intelligence that followed the Renaissance, the fanciful myth of a special representative began to pale and melt away. Already that fearless Bohemian John Huss had accused churchmen with treating the Roman pontiff as the fourth person of the Trinity and placing him on an equality with the Holy Ghost. "The Papacy," declared Martin Luther, "is man's invention. God knows nothing of it." (*Es ist ein Menschenfund, das Papstthum, da Gott nichts davon weiss.*)*

Rooted in the *Urdummheit* of superstition, the idea of special representatives selected by Me is nothing more than a transient shadow on a phan-

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*Luther: *Grund und Ursache*, vol. VII, p. 433 (Weimar ed.), 1521.

tom stage crowded with illusory scenery. When the inexorable fingers of Fact lift the veil of Fancy all such mediæval notions will go "where shadows go after the sun goes down."

DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS

Closely connected with the idea of infallibility in the sphere of religion is the doctrine of divine right in the sphere of politics. Both belong to the nature of monarchy.

From the earliest times men did not draw a distinction between the function of the priest and that of the king. He who was the guardian of the community was by that same token the head of the nation's shrine. Inasmuch as all law and authority were believed to be divine in origin, religion became a function of the state and the state an organ of religion.

At this stage of man's development no one recognized government as a *natural* order of things. Everywhere it was conceived as a supernatural, divine institution, providentially appointed, having My authoritative seal affixed to it. For that reason the civil ruler was officially regarded as the minister of My divine will behind whose authority stands My authority as its sanction and source. He is to be obeyed as the viceregent of Heaven; to resist him is to resist Me.

The ancient Hebrews entertained in large measure just such views as to the origin and organization of their nation. Conceiving their governmental system as a theocracy, they held the notion that it was directly established by My will, attended by signs and miracles and bearing upon its face the broad inscription: "Thus saith the Lord." As My representative Moses acted in a dual rôle: civil governor and religious leader. In this capacity the people recognized in him a divinely appointed leader supernaturally qualified for his duties.

Outside of Palestine closely similar views were widely held. The kings of such far-separated lands as Egypt, Mexico, Japan, and Rome were regarded by their subjects as semi-divine and frequently worshipped as deities. As late as the third century educated Romans were still paying homage to their kings as My representatives. (Even to-day in Japan emperor-worship, in the strict sense of offering divine honors to a human being, is not altogether a thing of the past.)

In the arena of European history the intense conflict over the question of divine right was first staged between the Pope and the kings. By a slow accumulation of power, over the centuries, the Roman See came to assert for the Pope not only complete religious authority but, as My viceroy on earth, complete temporal primacy over the destinies of the nations. This was all very good as long as Europe was in semi-barbaric chaos, but with the rise of nationalism the situation took on an altogether different complexion. More and more irritated by the cast-iron grip of the Church with her sharp weapons of excommunication and interdict, the Christian kings found it necessary to evolve a counter-claim. This they did by boldly projecting the theory that they too were just as much ordained by Me to rule over their people as the Pope—in fact, more so! Does not the Scripture announce to "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's"? Does not St. Paul enjoin constituted authority when he states that the "Powers that be are ordained of God"? And did not Christ himself say unto Pilate "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, unless it were given thee from above"?

By asserting their own divine right the kings sought to demonstrate that their empires were held immediately from Me and not from the Pope. "Since the Emperor is God's vicar, he cannot be the Pope's vassal"—so ran the argument.

Such, in its modern setting, is the essence of this much misunderstood doctrine of the divine right of kings. It was a way of freeing themselves from papal control, when they declared—in the spirit of those days—that inasmuch as I made the direct appointment of sovereigns (for "only God can make an heir") it was not at all necessary to think that such power was derived from the Pope.

But the story does not stop here. In the course of time a new contest arose—not between king and pope but between king and people. The doctrine that had done such valuable service in the past by helping them defeat the claims of Rome was now invoked to crush the growing political consciousness of the masses. There is no denying that men love their fictions: just as the patriot wins applause by the mere waving of a flag, so the theorist wins his people by invoking My sanction. Aiming to justify their arbitrary political authority against the rights of their subjects, the royal houses claimed for themselves "divine appointment."

One need not seek a more brazen expression of this theory than those statements contained in the writings and speeches of King James I of England. In justification of his arbitrary authority he told his subjects that kings are rightly called gods "for they exercise a manner of resemblance of Divine power upon earth." Continuing to formulate his ideas he explained to Parliament that "as it is atheism and blasphemy to dispute what God can do, so it is presumption and high contempt for a subject to dispute what a king can do."

In spite of its historical importance the theory of the divine right of kings is gone. (Old Andrew Melvill told James that he was nothing more than "God's sillie vassall.") What to-day remains of the doctrine in the out-of-the-way corners of the earth is nothing more than a last, faded, tattered remnant of a once powerful world-wide superstition. The shores of history are strewn with the wrecks and discards of despotisms, oligarchies, kingdoms, and empires. In an enthusiastic passion for democracy the poet sings:

> "God said, I am tired of kings,
> I suffer them no more."*

As a phase of My biography the divine-right theory will continue to excite the interest of future generations only as a dinosaur viewed in a museum. However, modern men have learnt much by passing over this road of political experience. They now know—or ought to know—that the state is a human institution serving human needs, and that its rulers represent human authority rather than divine appointment.

INFALLIBILITY

Deeply rooted in the unscientific mind there are strong psychological needs that assert themselves in a craving for authority. Out of the same cloth from which men fashioned the doctrine of the divine right of kings they wove their infallibilities.

*Emerson: "Boston Hymn," 1863.

An infallibility is at bottom a court of final appeal in which there is supposed to exist a perfect body of truth sanctioned by Me and held in deposit by men acting as My chosen representatives. Various types of uncontaminated guarantees have long existed among all nations and all religions. They cover a wide range: taboos, ceremonies, dogmas, creeds, affirmations, axioms, persons, books, councils, laws—an endless chain of massive authorities encircling the earth.

While every country and nation has had its share of infallibility, nowhere was it developed with such severe logic or with such sharp swords as upon the soil of Western Europe. Here the idea grew into an unrivalled completeness and here too it managed to surround itself with theologies and administrations that openly won for it wide-spread recognition. The warring factions of Church and state, each claiming to be in possession of divinely delegated authority, spoke and acted in My Name. "The Supreme Pontiff cannot err" was the maxim of the ecclesiastical supporters, to which the bold asserters of the civil law just as sincerely rejoined "The King cannot err."

Had the battle in Europe been only between these two rival infallibilities—the Church on one side and the state on the other—the whole matter would indeed have been quite simple. What complicated the entire affair was the existence of at least three different ideas within the Church itself as to where men could find a perfect expression of My revelation. Some urged that infallibility could be located only in the Bible; others claimed that the Church alone was its source (some holding to the view that the Pope was above the Councils, over against the claims of those who said the Councils were above the Pope); still a third class of thinkers declared in favor of the historical Christ as the final seat of My authority and proceeded to use either their conscience or their reason to find out just how this could be.

Long before the storm clouds of Protestantism broke over Europe there were loud denials that the Roman Papacy is the sole representative of My will and purpose on earth. Already the Greek Catholic Church had set up her own hierarchy as a distinct rival to the claims of the Holy See. But the essence of Protestantism was its insistence upon the Bible as being the highest authority, in fact, the only persistent, immutable, divine channel through which I revealed My innermost plans. The nature of the infallibility of this Book is nowhere presented with more insistence than in the opening chapter of the Protestant Westminster Confession:

> The authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth

> itself), the Author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God. . . . The Supreme Judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures.

Acting upon the basis of this principle, the Protestant churches split into as many denominations as there were interpreters of the Bible. And each interpreter honestly believed that he alone spoke My mind! If one church claimed that it was the *Church of the Living God,* another organization was sure to set up a rival claim that it was the *"True" Church of the Living God,* only to be outdone by a third party calling itself the *"Only True" Church of the Living God.* From this spirit of division within division there arose as many infallibilities as there were denominations. As each group could manage to assemble passages from the Bible to prove its teachings I was regarded as the author of them all. Of course, sensible men soon saw the awkwardness of such a *reductio ad absurdum,* and refusing to believe that I could be guilty of colossal confusions, they have come to regard denominationalism as nothing more than a scandal.*

In the Catholic fold things were somewhat different. There the battle of infallibility was fought out

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*See a very recent and able presentation of this position by Reverend Peter Ainslie: *The Scandal of Christianity*, Chicago, 1929.

along other lines—chiefly between the Pontiff and the Council. After many centuries of heated discussion the Pope finally was declared victor, and on the 18th day of July, 1870, in the city of Rome the Vatican Council approved the Dogma of Infallibility in his favor.

In the right transept of St. Peter's, Pius IX read the new decree by the flickering light of a candle. His councillors, assembled in deep silence, were startled by a violent thunderstorm as the lightning flashed through the dome of the basilica. And just as the Old Testament declares that the Ten Commandments were approved on Mt. Sinai amidst thunders and lightnings, so the supporters of this dogma interpreted the storm as a direct confirmation from heaven. (But there were others, professing the same theology, who strangely enough regarded the storm as a mark of My divine displeasure!)

Fearing change as a child fears to walk, the Church set forth the craving of pre-scientific man for an assured certainty. Speaking of My part in this matter the official text of the dogma declares:

> Therefore, faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, for the Glory of God our Savior, the exaltation of the Catholic Religion and the salvation of Christian people, the Sacred Council approving, we teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: that the Roman Pontiff when he speaks *ex cathedra,* that is, when in discharge of the office of Pastor and

> Doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church; by the Divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals: and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church. But if anyone—which may God avert—presume to contradict this our definition, let him be anathema.

Men tolerate their infallibilities only because these certainties carry a strange and intoxicating joy. They love to feed their souls upon grandiose fictions, as though freedom from all possibility of error could be guaranteed by a direct revelation from Me. Possessed with the idea that they have actually got divine truth enclosed within a ring-fence, they boast of nothing more than the thought of administering "original trusts" through channels of My supernatural grace.

But the realm of knowledge is democratic. It regards all things as fit subjects for inquiry, correction and further development. I have given no monopoly on truth to any one. With the disappearance of autocracy in religion and government all infallibilities will gradually pass away. Men will no more be led astray by the foolish search for some miraculous guarantee against error. They will no longer seek truth ready-made without the trouble of thinking for themselves. Of course, it does seem wonderfully convenient to have a patent religion to settle all doubts, just as it would be convenient to have an infallible medicine which always cured. However, My method is not one of trying to save mortals the necessary discipline of growth or the quest of knowledge. . . .

Men are to seek that they may find.

THE BIBLE AND ASTRONOMY

Every thinking person to-day knows that the earth is not stationary but that it revolves about the sun. No longer is it necessary for people to picture Me enthroned upon "the circles of the heavens" turning with My own hands the sun and the moon in order to give motion to these celestial orbs. The mediæval idea that I open and close the windows of heaven to let down upon earth the waters "above the firmament" has been cast into the limbo of discredited knowledge. When one compares the modern views of astronomy over against the childlike conceptions of antiquity it can easily be appreciated what revolutionary changes must of necessity be recorded in My biography.

It has already been pointed out how, by reason of the excessive veneration of supposedly "sacred" books, men have sincerely and quite honestly believed that I sanctioned persecution. In like manner they have upheld the crudest notions regarding the relationship of the earth to the heavens, and this in face of incontrovertible scientific evidence to the contrary.

Certain views as to the roundness of the earth were somewhat vaguely cherished even by the old Greeks, especially Plato and Aristotle. Christianity, inheriting the writings of these philosophers, made it possible for a few advanced thinkers to attempt a development of this notion of sphericity. Unfortunately, their intellectual efforts ran into a solid stone wall of disapproval; for it was definitely declared that the Gospel of Christ was committed to the views set forth in the Old Testament because "this presents the true knowledge of God to man."

By selecting here and there certain passages of Scripture it was shown that I built the universe somewhat on the plan of the Jewish tabernacle, box-like and oblong, with two specially designed compartments. The upper division of this vast box was, of course, reserved for Me and My adorable angels whose duty consisted largely in hanging out the stars at night and pushing the sun and moon back and forth across the heavens. The lower compartment was the abode of man.

While living in this lower section (during the sixth century A. D.) the Egyptian monk, Cosmas

Indicopleustes, set forth with massive detail the complete system of the universe, based upon these ideas. First of all he began with an attack on the spherical theory and after having demolished this idea to his complete satisfaction he proceeded to give the true doctrine of the shape of the universe as evidenced by the Bible. "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, One consubstantial and life-controlling God, from Whom cometh down every good and perfect gift,"—so runs the author's invocation,—"I open my stammering and unready lips, trusting in my Lord that He would vouchsafe me His spirit of wisdom." After he had spent hours in working out all the fine points as revealed in the Bible he summed up the results of his researches in this language: "We say therefore with Isaiah that heaven embracing the universe is a vault, with Job that it is joined to the earth, and with Moses that the length of the earth is greater than its breadth." Having made this pronouncement, Cosmas further declared that inasmuch as the angels and the prophets agreed in this definition I would not hesitate to send to Hell all who question it.

With all sincerity and zeal men can devote themselves to the dissemination of ideas impossibly twisted and maleficent. Worse still, they can, by their very dogmatism, generate far-reaching influences that last over the centuries, particularly when their ideas are given out with My sanction and uttered in My Name. In appraising the work of Cosmas a distinguished scientist was led to say:

> Had he not set out with the purpose of making facts bend to pre-judgments and forcing the heavens to tell the glory of God, Cosmas might have advanced the science he set himself to overthrow: but it was this very destructive purpose that led him to write; he recognised no good in knowledge apart from the word of the Scriptures. . . . In the "Topography" his interest was mainly in constructing a theological system of the universe; never before or since was so complete and so ambitious an attempt made in this direction.*

The influence of Cosmas and his method of ascertaining the truth may be seen in America as late as 1873. It was during this year that a theological professor in St. Louis published a book on astronomy and religion in which he did not hesitate to choose the archaic notions of the Bible in preference to modern scientific data—all this on the mistaken assumption that the Scriptures represent an authentic message directly from Me. "Which is right?" asked this reverend theologian. He answered by saying that "It would be very simple to me which is right, if it were only a question of human import. But the wise and truthful God has expressed Himself on this matter in the Bible. The entire Holy Scripture settles the question that the earth is the principal

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*Beazley: *The Dawn of Modern Geography*, p. 285, London, 1897.

body of the universe, that it stands fixed, and that the sun and moon only serve to light it."*

AN INTERESTING SUBTERFUGE

"Animals, which move, have limbs and muscles; the earth has no limbs or muscles, therefore it does not move."

Armed with arguments like this the mediæval Church did not hesitate to declare the idea of the earth's motion to be the most abominable and pernicious of all heresies against Me. To uphold such a system was deemed the sheerest kind of atheism.

But without the slightest thought of atheism in his heart Nicolaus Copernicus had finished his monumental work on *The Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies.* That was thirteen years before his death. Not, however, until the year before he died did he consent to give his manuscript to the printer. No one even at that time had the least idea that the old heavens were being "folded away like a scroll" and that a new earth was being given to men. But Copernicus knew. And realizing that his theory was a deliberate innovation upon the teachings of the Church that had long ago baptized and adopted the Ptolemaic system as an integral part of her theology, he hit upon the shrewd device of dedicating

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*Quoted in Andrew D. White: *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, vol. I, p. 151, New York, 1898.

his work to the Pope. Even with this expedient it was fortunate for him that he closed his earthly career just as his book came off the press; for, with the geocentric astronomy weakened, the geocentric theology was in danger.

The real revolution came just a few years later in the person of Galileo who by means of the telescope managed to get outside of dogma. Having arrived at the same ideas held by his predecessor, he actually began to prove Copernicus' views to be the only ones that were scientifically correct. Now were the theological heavens completely shattered! For Galileo "pried a flat and inert earth out of the pages of Scripture where it lay embedded, rounded it, and set it spinning in a fair orbit to the tune of the law . . . men looked at their Bible with dismay . . . an empty pit where the earth had rested on its pillars, and all around its edge were texts left as ragged as a crater."

A loud wailing cry went up out of the land. The eccentric orb must be flattened into place again to restore the integrity of Scripture. So, instead of being rewarded with high honors, Galileo met with the most persistent opposition ever accorded an astronomer. The whole struggle to crush him involved intrigues and counter-intrigues, plots and counterplots, lying and spying. Summoned before the Inquisition at Rome, his science was denounced as "foolish, absurd, false in theology, and heretical, because expressly contrary to Holy Scripture . . . and from a theological point of view at least, opposed to the true faith."

Many years after Galileo had been crushed, the theologians of the Church, realizing their prodigious defeat and awkward blunder, began to palm off the blame on Me in order to save their own faces. I was actually charged with deception. . . . "It may well be doubted," wrote a theological apologist as late as the nineteenth century, "whether the Church did retard the progress of scientific truth. What retarded it was the circumstance that God has thought fit to express many texts of Scripture in words which have every appearance of denying the earth's motion. But it is God who did this, not the Church. . . ."*

A PROBLEM IN ECONOMICS

Throughout antiquity and the greater part of the mediæval period there existed a strong belief that the loaning of money at interest was a horrible sin condemned by Me in no uncertain terms. Just as slavery began as a humanitarian act to save the prisoner of war from a brutal death (and then ended by developing evils of its own) so the early prohibitions against taking interest were conceived in the

**Dublin Review*, October, 1865, p. 419.

spirit of charity and helpfulness only to end, themselves, in a mass of hardships and economic confusions.

Commercial loans were unknown among the early Hebrews. The only loans were of a charitable nature. The early legislation of the Old Testament was based upon economic conditions prevailing in agricultural communities. Under these simple conditions the ancient lawgivers issued their prohibitions against the taking of interest. (The frequent translation of "usury" for the biblical term used is incorrect: where the word "usury" occurs in the Pentateuch ordinary "interest" is meant.)

As commerce in the modern sense had not yet even been faintly dreamt of, it can readily be understood that the laws of ancient Israel applied primarily to this earlier mode of life. This can be seen in the very oldest enactment in the Bible against interest, located in the twenty-second chapter of the Book of Exodus. Here is a piece of early Hebrew legislation forbidding the taking of a return on money lent to the poor. (The thought of money lent for commercial purposes was not present.)

As the Hebrews progressed in their commercial affairs it became necessary to alter this old law and make concessions to the newer trade activities. With the appearance of the Deuteronomic Code a modification was carefully injected. The new law forbids the taking of interest from a brother Israelite, but in the same breath permission is given in the case of a non-Jew:

> Thou shalt not lend upon interest to thy brother: interest of money, interest of victuals, interest of anything that is lent upon interest. Unto a foreigner thou mayest lend upon interest; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon interest; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou puttest thy hand unto, in the land whither thou goest in to possess it.*

Christianity from its very infancy adopted the Old Testament legislation against interest; for it too regarded all returns on money as an exploitation of the defenseless and unfortunate. This anti-commercial idea was part of that larger view of the early Church, which regarded all business as essentially evil, with its roots deep in human covetousness. It was, in short, a Christian principle that the loan of money did not justify a charge for its use.

The tendency to outlaw in My Name certain legitimate and necessary returns on capital exercised a crippling effect upon trade. Popes and Councils over a period of fifteen hundred years denounced the taking of interest. But the louder their denunciations the more was it evident that the ecclesiastical law was full of breaches. At the Council of Vienna, Pope Clement V declared that if any one "shall pertinaciously presume to affirm that the taking of

*Deuteronomy 23: 19.

interest for money is not a sin, we decree him to be a heretic, fit for punishment." In 1586 Sixtus V issued his Bull *Detestabilis Avaritiæ* forbidding the practice as "detestable to God and man, as condemned by sacred canons and as contrary to Christian charity." This principle was reaffirmed and explicitly defined as late as 1745 by Benedict XIV in an encyclical to the Italian bishops.

With the emergence of modern commerce and the growth of a capitalistic class it was found necessary to make concessions. A religious rule that made all banking a breach of law could not be expected to keep its ground in the economy of modern Europe. "As it is quite certain that commercial and industrial enterprise cannot be carried on on a large scale without borrowing, and as it is equally certain that these loans can only be effected by paying for them in the shape of interest, it is no exaggeration to say that the Church had cursed the material development of civilization. As long as her doctrine of usury was believed and acted on, the arm of industry was paralyzed, the expansion of commerce was arrested and all the countless blessings that have flowed from them were withheld."*

Realizing this situation both Jews and Christians now began to change their theological opinions. In

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*Lecky: *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. II, p. 252 (revised ed.), New York, 1914.

order properly to accomplish this manœuvre without too great a sense of departure from the old it was necessary to bring a vast array of casuistry to bear on the subject. The most practical solution made by the theologians was the suggestion of John Calvin, who propounded a distinction between interest and usury. In the Catholic camp Le Coreur came to the defense of the modern spirit. His theological treatise of 1682 maintained that moderate interest might be exacted on commercial loans. Sir Robert Filmer in England, Pufendorf and Leibnitz in Germany, Salmasius and Grotius in Holland—all led the way to right reason.

Although the taking of interest was long branded as a horrible sin it is noteworthy that modern theologians have ceased to regard it that way. Jew and Christian, Catholic and Protestant have all outgrown the superstition. Despite the hard work of twenty-eight Councils and seventeen Popes and the most eminent scholars, doctors of the law, defenders of the faith, and rigid canonists the old idea could not be saved. No amount of condemnation in My Name could resist the march of progress.

No law now exists to prohibit interest-bearing loans. Men do not seek to discourage any necessary measure of their economic life—their only desire is to regulate it.

FANATICISM

To present a complete story of the bitterness, hatreds, antagonisms, needless divisions, and more than needless martyrdoms that have grown out of the spirit of fanaticism would necessitate more space than this biography can justly allot to such a sombre recital. But no one for that reason need think that this is a small matter; for a large part of the world's crimes and miseries have been due to it.

The seed of fanaticism is the conviction that I have been on familiar terms with certain chosen individuals to whom My will was communicated and that these persons know all that is to be known about Me. Whatever is not known to this elect body, or whatever is viewed differently by them, is regarded as error to be rooted out by fire and sword. The assumption—more strictly speaking, the presumption—that certain "selected" people are privy to My designs has provoked wars, created schisms, and set back the progress of the race.

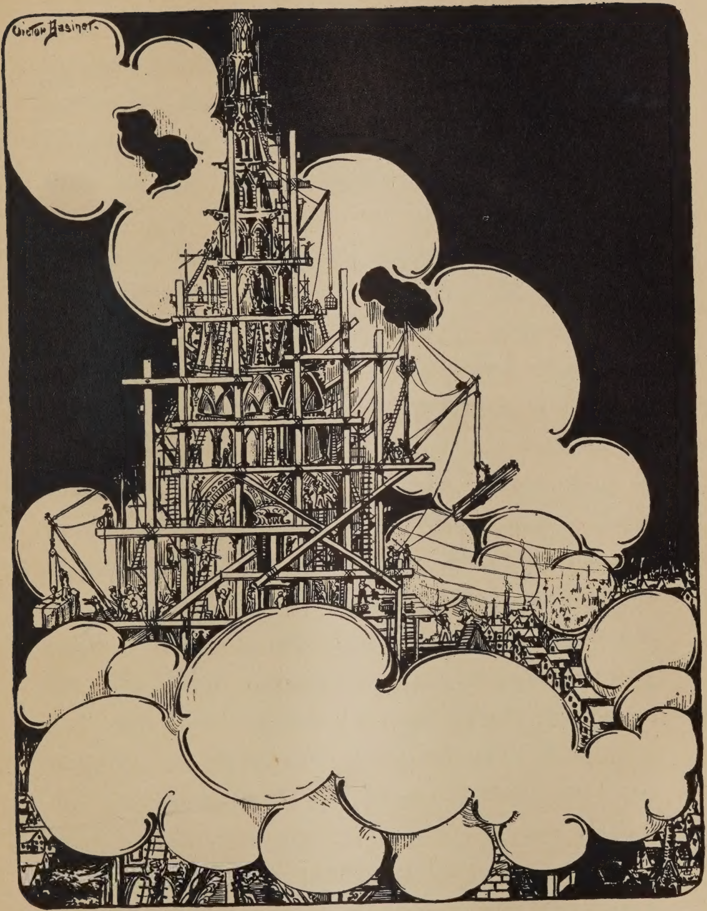
Very often the fanatic seizes some genuine fact—usually a half-truth—and proceeds to draw the conclusion that I must be supporting him with the whole of My almightiness. For those who have seized any other facts there can be nothing but condemnation. The moment the "saints" believe that they are in possession of a commission from Me to bless all the nations of the earth, the nations must submit to being blessed or, in the event of refusal, be hacked to pieces. Hacking to pieces being an easy form of argument, the responsibility for adopting it was thrown on Me.

A single page lifted from the history of the Dutch provinces will illustrate this kind of fanaticism. In sending a jewelled hat and sword to the Duke of Alva as a reward for the execution of eighteen thousand persons during his term of office (1567–1573) the Pope gave his approval of the bloody measures. In his message to Alva the Pontiff bade him remember that "when he put the hat upon his head that he was guarded by it as by a helmet of righteousness and that it was an emblem of the heavenly crown prepared for all princes who supported the Roman Catholic faith." The motto engraved on the sword ran, "Receive this Holy Sword as a gift from God with which thou shalt cast down the adversaries of My people, Israel."

At the same time that Alva was carrying on his work of fanaticism in Holland the Jesuit order was preparing the way for the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572. The slaughter of the Huguenots was no sudden or unpremeditated act, for already three years before the event the Pope wrote to the French king that "when God has given to you and to us the victory, it will be your duty to punish the heretics with all severity and thus avenge not only your own wrongs but those of the Almighty God." He quoted the example of Saul who was punished for sparing the Amalekites and further wrote, that "under no circumstances and for no consideration ought the enemies of God to be spared."

When Rome received the news of this massacre it was a signal for rejoicing. The cannon of St. Angelo were fired off, a *Te Deum* was sung in St. Mark's. On a bronze medal, cast by order of Pope Gregory XIII to commemorate St. Bartholomew's Day, an angel is represented carrying a cross and a drawn sword directing the assassins on the streets of Paris. In a letter to the French king the Pontiff said that the massacre was better news to him than a hundred victories of Lepanto.

While the causes of fanaticism are various, there is always the tendency for men to let their feelings outrun their knowledge and judgment. Particularly when they are under the spell of some potent misconception! The Chapter of Seville doubtless felt it was doing Me a great service when its members solemnly resolved and inscribed in the Minute Book of July 8, 1401, these words: "Let us build so great a cathedral to the glory of God that those who come after us will think us mad to have attempted it." Doubtless, too, in the destrucion of the Alexandrian library the Caliph Omar felt that he was honoring


Victor Basinet

FANATICISM

"Let us build so great a cathedral to the glory of God that those who come after us will think us mad to have attempted it."

Me, for when the request came asking that its treasures be spared he gave a theological answer based on crude fanaticism. "If," replied Omar, "the books agree with the Koran, the Word of God, they are useless, and need not be preserved; if they disagree with it, they are pernicious. Let them be destroyed."

Because he feels himself supported by My word the fanatic believes that the man on the other side has no rights which he is bound to respect. Motivated by this principle the ancient Jewish high-priest John Hyrcanus (125 B. C.) sent troops of Hebrew soldiers into Idumea and forcibly circumcized the male population. Because Samuel hewed Agag to pieces "before the Lord" some of the Scotch Covenanters said, "Hew Archbishop Sharp to pieces." And they did it in My name, but they made a miserable mistake. In this same spirit of mistaken zeal the Inquisition depopulated towns and districts, provinces and kingdoms; it martyred Bruno, smote Galileo, and threatened every eminence in science and free thought. It has been calculated that ten million human beings were burned by the Mother Church during the centuries of papal power.

In his drama, "Saul" (1763), which the police tried to suppress, Voltaire presents a picture of this type of fanaticism in all its naked horror. It is in the scene where Samuel reproves Saul for not killing Agag that the French philosopher teaches his mighty lesson:

Samuel: God commands me to tell you that He repents of having made you king.

Saul: God repents! Only they who commit errors repent. His eternal wisdom cannot be unwise. God cannot commit errors.

Samuel: He can repent of having set on the throne those who do.

Saul: Well, who does not? Tell me, what is my fault?

Samuel: You have pardoned a king.

Agag: What! Is the fairest of virtues considered a crime in Judea?

Samuel [to Agag]: Silence! do not blaspheme. [To Saul]: Saul, formerly king of the Jews, did not God command you by my mouth to destroy all the Amalekites, without sparing women, or maidens, or children at the breast?

Agag: Your god—gave such a command! You are mistaken, you meant to say, your devil.

Samuel: Saul, did you obey God?

Saul: I did not suppose such a command was positive. I thought that goodness was the first attribute of the Supreme Being, and that a compassionate heart could not displease him.

Samuel: You are mistaken, unbeliever. God reproves you, your sceptre will pass into other hands.

As the Chinese built a wall about themselves and looked upon their country as the flowery and celestial nation, and all on the outside as barbarians, so have different bodies of believers perpetuated an unbelievable narrowness of spirit. The Mohammedan speaks of the Christian as a *dog;* and the Christian contemptuously refers to the Mohammedan as an *infidel.* Christian sects bandy among themselves the words *heretic* and *infidel,* and the words are felt to mark a chasm as wide as that which separates earth from heaven.

When the human race becomes less intoxicated with its presumptions the spirit of fanaticism—a form of mental drunkenness—will become more and more ridiculous. The man who can say "This is the true account of the matter, and since truth is truth, any other account, which falls short of or goes beyond this must be false," that man is a fanatic. When such a misguided individual is capable of gathering disciples about him and leads them by the same notion a denomination is created—"others may be right and others may be wrong: we are right and cannot be wrong."

Because there is a partial truth that inheres in almost every long-lived error it will take several more centuries of patient labor for the human race to get beyond the talons of fanaticism. In enlightened countries fanaticism is already on the wane, for religion, in order to be acceptable to the modern man, must be underwritten by all that is intelligent.

Some day—it is yet far off—fanaticism will be studied as a fascinating episode in the long record of man's mental Odyssey. In the meantime men are at each other's throats.

DEFENDING THE FAITH

What infatuation men have had to believe themselves in possession of an exclusive body of truth from Me! And worse still, what pugnaciousness to insist that others accept it! There is no sadder chapter in My biography—surely none that drips with more blood—than man's absurd fancy that he pleases Me by persecuting his fellow man in the interests of Faith.

Whenever a strongly organized religion came to believe itself in possession of an exclusive revelation from Me it sooner or later unsheathed the sword in order zealously to defend this thing grossly misrepresented as Faith. The claim to a possession of truth has always led to the condemnation of what is held to be opposed to it. And the next step beyond condemnation is usually nothing less than forcible suppression.

In all truth, it is a sad blot on the pages of history that almost every religious body of any antiquity having once obtained power used it for its own support and to crush its enemies, always however temporarily succeeding in cloaking itself with the semblance of promoting My high and holy interests. (Instead of letting Religion save them, men have been more anxious to save religion—that is, of course, their own particular brand of it.)

However justifiable such methods may have been under the circumstances of an uncouth age—and each religion has never failed to produce a liberal supply of its own apologists capable of explaining away these unlovely episodes—it is really astonishing how the most horrible acts of plunder, violence, murder, rapine, have been waged in order to defend Faith. On the famous Moabite stone—to cite but one typical example of antiquity—King Mesha of Moab tells how his army captured the City of Nebo and how he proceeded to slaughter all within its walls, men, women and children. This holocaust, he is careful to have it known, was performed as a religious duty to his conception of Me as the tribal god Chemosh, "for [whom] I had devoted it all" as an acceptable sacrifice.

The same cruel and savage temper, combined with deep religious fervor, may be found in the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings. The Assyrians, like the Babylonians, built their empires religiously as much as politically. Whenever a victory over the enemy was achieved it was regarded as the victory of one god over the other. Did the Assyrians conquer the Babylonians? Then that was conclusive proof that the gods of Assyria were mightier than the deities of their adversaries.

Under the name of Assur the Assyrians had long worshipped Me in an imageless manner. I was popularly represented as the disk of the sun from which rays or wings projected in all directions. As the recognized head of the Assyrian pantheon, it is no wonder that the ancient Assyrian kings frequently incorporated My name in high-sounding words like *Assurbanipal* (literally, *Assur creates a Son*). Although the Assyrians worshipped Me in an imageless fashion I was, none the less, conceived to be frightfully cruel—at least as cruel as their kings, and that was bad enough.

Much of the very old historical writings of the ancient Hebrews is disfigured by just this type of cruelty and its religious justification. To be sure, the Old Testament is a long record of Palestinian events covering many centuries of development from a chaotic and half-savage stage of culture to a very high degree of civilization. As children of their day the Hebrews were no worse than their neighbors—in many respects they were better. But like them all they inflicted the strangest cruelties on their enemies and then justified the horrors as pleasing to Me.

ODIUM THEOLOGICUM

As long as Christians were ruled by pagan governments loud complaints of injustice, misrule, and cruel treatment were spread among the believers. But the moment the tables were reversed—that is, when the Christians got the upper hand—neither mercy nor forbearance were extended to the former masters.

Beginning with Theodosius and Justinian there was an exchange of weapons. Severe decrees were issued against those who were non-Christians. Within half a century fully sixty-eight different laws were promulgated with regard to the treatment of those who denied that Christ was My only begotten son. And now began the ruthless and wholesale destruction of the art, literature and science of antiquity. The University of Athens was closed, and its professors deprived of their livelihood; the Olympic games were abolished; the Sibylline books were burned; the classical temples were torn from their foundations and their art-treasures of centuries mercilessly destroyed. Alexandria in Egypt, that had long been the seat of a great university, was turned into a bedlam of fanatic monks eager to make a desert out of an intellectual oasis. Under the leadership of their local bishop they demanded that this renowned school be shut down. When it was not closed they took matters into their own hands and broke their way into the lecture rooms. Here they seized the lovely Hypatia, the last of the great Platonic teachers, and—in My Name—mutilated her body, threw her into the streets, and left her to the mercy of the dogs.

Even within the fold of Christianity conditions were no better. The different warring parties were constantly at each other's throats with loud invectives, the vocabulary of their disputing churchmen being an arsenal of foul epithets. "The bitterest words were chosen to stigmatize heresy and heretics, that is all who departed from the accredited church teachings. Athanasius called the Arians 'dogs, wolves, lions, devils,' and other opprobrious names. At the Council of Ephenes, 449, the members alleged to be unorthodox, were denounced as Judases and murderers. To hateful and abusive words were added violent assaults upon the persons of dissenters."*

Of course, the great outbursts of slaughter were not altogether purely ecclesiastical. Other motives—especially economic—were equally strong, and for that reason it is not easy to disentangle true reasons from the fictitious. With the rise of the crusading spirit, which spread horror far and wide, a series of wars were carried on, ostensibly to please Me—in reality they were a religious cloak thrown over unworthy political ambitions. In authorizing the first Crusade, Pope Urban II (A. D. 1095) laid down the rule that it is not murder to kill excommunicated persons and conquer their territories, provided it is done from religious motives.

Every reputable historian now knows that the

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*Schaff: *Our Fathers' Faith and Ours*, p. 142 (see also p. 514 f.), New York, 1928.

war against the Albigensians was in a large measure perpetrated in order to strengthen the French monarchy. Economic factors were at play in the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition which was designed to supply the Spanish king with a definite and effective instrument in an effort to weld a polyglot country into a homogeneous body. The persecutions carried on in Bohemia were brought about as an element in a desperate effort to uphold the German dominion over the Czechs. . . .

For centuries both the Catholics and the Protestants in France carried on guerilla warfare with shameful cruelties, both sides invoking My aid to lend sanction to base and murderous practices. Dazzled by military glories such as the thirteenth century could give to the excesses of fanaticism, Simon IV de Montfort assembled a group of knights who were eager for slaughter. After pledging themselves to subdue their fellow countrymen they set out to accomplish by the sword what Pope Innocent III failed to do by peaceful overtures. Like the ancient Hebrews who completely annihilated the Amalekites in My Name, Simon and his followers took the City of Béziers in southern France and slaughtered without mercy all of its fifteen thousand inhabitants. Before brandishing his sword de Montfort inquired of Milon, the papal legate, "How shall we know the heretics from the faithful?" This was the answer: "Kill them all, God will be able to recognize His own."

LUTHER AND MOHAMMED

Luther and Mohammed had much in common—particularly in the way they went about defending the Faith.

At first, Mohammed was very lenient in his attitude toward the Jews and the Christians, for he fondly entertained the hope of winning them over to his revelations. But when he saw his plans falling to the ground his revelations took on a dark and sinister color: they began to be filled with severe and solemn judgments upon all non-Moslems. How dared these infidels to disagree with him?—particularly when he was speaking in My Name!

Mohammed stood on no ceremony. Infidels were all one and the same people. "I have been sent," he assured his followers, "by the Almighty in these last days, with the sword. I myself and my nation shall not let the sword quit our hands until people worship Allah. My sustenance depends on the sword. All who do not obey my command shall be subdued and humiliated. The gates of the highest paradise are under the shadow of the sword. The nearest to the Prophet in degree are those who war for Islam. To fight once for the sake of Allah is more acceptable than going on pilgrimages forty times. The highest deed of the believer is to fight the enemies of religion and the state."

Animated by these holy verses the Moslems went into the battle-field. In time it came to be recognized that the highest Islamic virtues are the foundations of the highest qualities of the warrior. Military service took on a sacred religious character. "To watch on duty one night during war-time"—so ran the rule—"is preferable to fasting and praying one thousand nights."

Speaking of My part in these affairs Ibn Abidin, the distinguished Moslem historian and theologian, once explained the matter in this wise: "Know thou," says Ibn Abidin, "that the command of fighting was revealed by degrees: for the Prophet was at first commanded to deliver his message: then to discuss and dispute and endeavor to convince the unbelievers by arguments: then the Believers were permitted to fight: then they were commanded to fight, at first at any time, except the sacred months; then absolutely without exception."

Various and glorious were the heavenly promises made in My Name by Mohammed to those of his fellow Arabs who would join the armies of his faithful. (Luther made similar ones to the Germans):

> Fight and kill those who fight and kill you. Whosoever fights with the enemy for Allah's sake, or is martyred, or attains victories, Allah shall reward him greatly. O Mos-

> lems! for guarding the religion of Islam, war is a duty laid upon you. Killing men may seem unpleasant to you, but you must know that the things which may not seem pleasant to you are most useful and good for you. The reward of war is victory and wealth in this world, and the blessings of paradise in the next world. O believers! fight with sincerity of heart and purpose, because Allah created you for the success of the religion of Islam.*

About a thousand years separates Mohammed from Luther. . . . Like the Prophet who struck out to win over the whole of Arabia, Luther entertained the hope of winning over to his new dispensation the whole of Germany. To that end he asserted the right of freedom for every Christian man. He frankly asked the enlightened conscience of Germany not to yield itself to the authority of Rome. He declared that heresy can never be kept off by force. However stoutly the Catholics may rage, Luther affirmed that "they cannot bring people farther than to follow them with mouth and hand—the heart they cannot compel, should they even tear at it." With strong language the former Augustinian monk declared that "Heresy is a spiritual thing, which no iron can hew down, no fire burn, no water drown." (Even Mohammed once said in an off moment: "Let there be no compulsion in religion.")

No sooner had Luther uttered his grand principles of freedom when the people began acting upon

*Quoted from the *Holy Wars of the Prophet* by Ahmed Refiq Bey, Constantinople, 1906.

them. The German peasants literally took him at his word. When the Reformer realized that the prospects of establishing his own particular type of religion were being seriously damaged by such liberties he immediately roused himself and, like Mohammed, thundered against those who dared to disagree with his principles. "O Lord God," he cried aloud to Me, "when such spirit is in the peasants, it is high time that they were slaughtered like mad dogs." Having delivered himself of these sentiments he now flung his energies on the side of ruthless repression in order to stem the tide of popular rising:

> Let there be no pity, it is the time of wrath, not of mercy. He who dies fighting for authority is a martyr before God. So wondrous are the times that princes can merit heaven better by bloodshed than by prayers. Therefore, dear lords, let him who can, stab, smite, destroy.

The revolt of the modern age against the barbarities committed in My Name is one of the most singular developments of contemporary theology; although as late as 1906 it was possible for Professor Henry Melvill Gwatkin of Oxford to see something very divine and sacred in the Moslem capacity for destruction. "It was indeed the sword of God," declares Dr. Gwatkin, "which smote both Rome and Persia on the Yermouk and at Cadesiya, the sword of God before which not a man could stand from India to Spain; and in the power of truth and right

Saladin scattered at Hattin the faithless chivalry of Latin Europe." Out of his storehouse of theological information the Reverend Gwatkin was sure that Islam "may have been, or rather must have been, a message from heaven. Whatever else it may contain, the moving force of its first heroic efforts was that thrilling and inspiring sense of God's reality and righteousness which the idol-worshippers of Eastern Christendom had lost. It might mean Paradise before and Hell behind; but none the less it also meant the old Hebrew battle-cry, Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered: and this was the faith in which Islam sent forth its armies on their wonderful career of victory. Some of us may smile at faith of that sort; but such faith has been a mighty force in history, and if there is a God at all His message and His power it must be."*

Within the last twenty-five years there has come over the theologians a profound change. These men now entertain very grave doubts that Mohammed ever received from Me any such lofty revelations about defending the Faith that the Koran tries to establish. According to one of the most recent theological estimates "Mohammed gave himself to practices—breaking the sacred months of truce, assassination of personal enemies, raiding the caravans of the Meccans—practices which may have been necessary

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*Gwatkin: *Knowledge of God*, vol. I, pp. 152 and 154, London, 1906.

to win by force the mastery of Arabia, but which are hard to defend when they are the deeds of one who is a preacher of righteousness and who claims to be voicing the inner counsels of the God of all mankind."*

In the past men have prostituted religion for every conceivable ambition. Largely scheming for selfish purposes they have defended Faith on the assumption that I was somehow baptized in their own particular form. With characteristic arrogance and naïveté they have believed, each in his own special way, that I made the universe for one particular sect. From this notion has come that morbid excess of self-exaltation in which men have felt divinely charged with the duty of exterminating all those who held contrary views.

It is a heavy price that must be paid for self-imposed misery and delayed development. Complete emancipation from the vassalage of barbarism is yet a long way off; and it is a pity that humanity will have to agonize over the consequence of folly. For men have a curious way of sticking to old ideas, believing them sacred because they are old.

"FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD!"

In a delightful series of addresses a recent Cambridge lecturer made bold to declare that "all sects

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*Soper: *Religions of Mankind*, p. 283, Cincinnati, 1921.

are inclined to take God's name in vain, presuming and boasting to be working for His glory when they are scheming for their own."*

The foolish things men have done to promote My glory merely adds another chapter to the mournful record of persecution in My Name.

There is, for example, the story of the martyrdom of Servetus, just one of countless incidents showing how easy it is for people to kill with quite good intentions.

On October 27, 1553, Michael Servetus was burnt at the stake. John Calvin ordered this treatment as a just punishment for heresy—that is, because of a theological difference. Servetus, who was a highly educated Spaniard, was opposed to certain Catholic doctrines. Having been arrested by the Inquisition in France, he managed to escape to Geneva where he had hoped to find liberty among the Protestants. But he was doomed to a quick disappointment; for the Protestants led by Calvin aided in his persecution and with equal zeal demanded his death. It was a shameful and cruel torture for one Christian to inflict on another, particularly in My Name.

Almost four hundred years after this tragic event a group of twentieth-century Calvinists raised a monument to Servetus at Champel (Switzerland) in expiation of the crime committed by their misguided

*Abrahams: *The Glory of God*, p. 66, London, 1925.

leader. The monument, which was dedicated on October 27, 1903, bears this interesting inscription:

> We, respectful and grateful sons of Calvin, our great Reformer, yet condemning an error which was that of his century, and firmly holding to liberty of conscience, according to the true principles of the Reformation and of the Gospel, have raised this monument in expiation.

(When Dr. J. Eugene Choisy, chairman of the monument committee and professor of church history in the University of Geneva, was asked why this act of extraordinary courage was carried through, he said, "We had to do it to retain our self-respect." . . . Thus it is that he whom one generation stones another enthrones!)

Each age has its own follies. The folly of mediævalism was the deeply intrenched belief that I punish theological error as if it were the most heinous of crimes. This view naturally led to persecution, for men reasoned that it was not wrong for them to commit an act which has My sanction. The Church solemnly taught that it was the duty of all believers to impose the only true doctrine, seeing that eternal interests were at stake.

Because of the high authority he enjoyed during the mediæval period St. Augustine (he died 430 A. D.) exerted a tremendous influence on the persecuting policies of the Church. Basing his theory upon the words "Compel them to come in"—words used by Jesus in a parable—the teaching that heretics are to be restrained by forcible and violent measures was entirely justified as a means to bring them back to submission. Although Augustine himself did not go to the extreme of justifying the death penalty for heretics, his followers did. Throughout Europe within a few centuries individuals were being put to death for dissent, and wars declared against entire communities infested with disbelief.

To suppress the heretic meant the prevention of the spread of error. What was more important for those who considered themselves to be My elect than to combat spiritual poison? Not only do wrong ideas detract from My glory but they dissolve the cement of organized society. Pope Gregory IX was acting as a child of his times when he founded that powerful engine of suppression known as the Inquisition. With such a weapon it became possible for Rome to reach out into every nook and cranny of the papal world. For hardly had Gregory passed from St. Peter's chair when Pope Innocent IV published a Bull which regulated this machinery "as an integral part of the social edifice in every city and every state."

Such a policy branded heretics more than ordinary criminals. Looked upon as My special enemies—vile creatures who thought more of their own glory than of Mine—it was deemed meritorious to rid the earth of such folk. Indulgences were therefore liberally granted to any one who contributed wood to the pile. "There have been moments in the history of Christianity—or of what was called so—when the slaughter of a million men, or the wiping out of an entire civilization, meant no more to the leaders of the Church than it did, by his own confession, to Napoleon."*

In making dogma it is extremely hard to avoid making heretics. Yet there never was a heresy which did not point to a neglect of truth. Irrespective of this historical principle the Inquisition proceeded upon the rule that better a hundred innocent should suffer than one guilty person escape. In his eighteen years of office, Cardinal Thomas de Torquemada had burned alive, it is computed, eighty-eight hundred victims, and punished ninety thousand in various ways, not for offences against the moral law or crimes against society, but for thoughts of their own about religion.

It is interesting to record in this biography man's changing conception of what constitutes My glory. Once upon a time theologians were strongly opposed to the study of anatomy because it seriously interfered with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. On biblical grounds they also inveighed against anæsthetics, believing that had I intended men and women to escape pain I would have given

*Jacks: *Religious Perplexities*, p. 69, New York, 1923.

some revelation to that effect. Did I not say unto Eve that woman would have to bear children in pain? What better argument to prove that the use of anæsthetics is unscriptural? But some one wiser than the others claimed that inasmuch as I put Adam to sleep before removing one of his ribs I must have practised anæsthesia in My own way.

That progress has been made in spite of all drawbacks is indicated in countless directions. No longer do men declare that inoculation "is an encroachment on the prerogatives of Jehovah, whose right it is to wound and smite." Modern Scotsmen actually smile at their ancestors for having denounced the use of fanning mills for winnowing grain as contrary to the text, "The wind bloweth where it listeth." And even in Lancaster, Ohio, no resolutions have been passed against railroads since the school board of that city in 1828 declared that "if God had designed that His intelligent creatures should travel at the frightful speed of fifteen miles an hour by steam, He would have foretold it through His holy prophets."

It would, however, be an altogether one-sided affair to paint the evil and foolish things men have done for My greater glory whilst overlooking the noble achievements. Hospitals for the sick, schools for the ignorant, benevolences for the poor—these and other socially helpful activities have been carried on in My name and for My greater glory. But—

and this is the spread of the difference—men have often done the right thing while holding the wrong theory.

To do good is one thing. To project that goodness on the principle that it is logically necessary to increase My glory is altogether a different matter. "This worship of glory arising from power," recently declared Professor A. N. Whitehead of Harvard, "is not only dangerous: it arises from a barbaric conception of God. I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the bones of those slaughtered because of men intoxicated by its attraction. . . . The glorification of power has broken more hearts than it has healed."*

*Whitehead: *Religion in the Making*, p. 55, New York, 1926.

BOOK IV

STRICTLY THEOLOGICAL

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CONCERNING DEFINITIONS

SINCE the advent of the Greek mind with its passion for exact definitions, theologians have attempted to carry over into the realm of philosophy a type of deductive thinking that would lead to an accurate understanding of My being and nature. For a period of almost two thousand years the thinkers of Western civilization have tantalized their minds with this itch for a definition. Were the historian to go back over the long centuries since the creed-makers first began their ratiocinations he could easily pile up an endless number of attempts to fix My divinity within the compass of human words. At the end of his pursuit he would—if he were at all intelligent—sum up its futility in the words of James Martineau:

> God is neither a being to be classified, nor a phenomenon to be foreseen. . . . As well might you attempt to put space under your microscope, or weigh gravitation in your scales. If you believe that God exists, and understand your words when you call Him "infinite" and "eternal," you cannot expect to find Him as one object among many but as a *Spirit in all*. . . .*

The difference between the modern mind and the ancient is the difference between the inductive rea-

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*Martineau: *Hours of Thought*, vol. I, p. 118, Boston, 1882.

soning of science and the deductive logic of the creeds. Within the range of this difference there lies a curious chapter of My biography, which is at the same time an interesting commentary on the human mind. For out of these two types of reasoning men have arrived at two ways of looking at Me. Modern thinking, based upon the inductive method, does not permit itself to generalize until sufficient knowledge has resulted from an investigation of the facts. In other words, science changes its creeds from time to time in order to make them conform as nearly as is humanly possible to things as they are.

Theology, on the other hand, has until very recent years largely pursued the other method. Instead of making her creeds conform to the facts, she has made facts conform to her creeds. Upon very hasty or superficial observations men have assumed certain things about Me and then immediately proceeded to reason from those assumptions. And if the facts did not accord with the assumptions, then so much the worse for the facts. Thus upon such loose nails of thought vast theological systems were made to hang. It is no wonder that a time has come when these nails can no longer support their ancient loads.

Considering the manner in which men proceeded to define Me, one would think that I had submitted Myself to a theological clinic and there, on the dissecting table, permitted the creed-makers to do their work, for the edification of ecclesiastical curiosity. Leslie Stephen once scornfully remarked that the kind of exactitude a biologist would use in describing a black beetle has been too long the kind the theologians have used to define My nature. (But it is just such attempts that make man so adorably foolish.)

The temper of modern progressive thought now seems to be moving toward a less childish view of the universe. Although it is very difficult to know how long man will keep up this spirit of mental maturity, still, while it lasts, the old traditional certitudes are daily becoming more uncertain. In the process of discrediting them he is writing a host of new pages in the history of his thought about Me. On the whole, it may be said that as a result of this new temper, particularly within the last two centuries, there has been a constantly growing modesty. Nowhere has this been as much in evidence as in the field of theology. For a long while the text-books on this discipline were called either *Dogmatic* Theology or *Positive* Theology—that is, in the days when man was as sure of his definitions as he was of Ptolemaic astronomy. But as his thought widened with the process of the sun he became less dogmatic, less positive, and so he called his theology merely *Evidences.* But even this, he soon felt, smacked too much of categorical conceit, and for that reason it was softened down into *Apologetics,* then into the *Philosophy of Religion:* and now the word in good taste is *Interpretation.*

At last it is beginning to dawn upon man that only in a mechanical world are exact definitions possible. Once the thought that My universe is dynamic crosses his mind he no longer seeks to impose upon himself static conceptions which exclude the very things he hopes to discover. Herein is his release from all stultification. His interpretations, dipped in beauty, become far more sensible than his ancient dogmas immersed in arrogance. Once he has escaped the darkness of his definitions there sweeps through his soul a sense of grandeur like the night-wind bringing up scents from the sea. Day dawns and he sings a pæan of gladness:

"I inhaled the violet's breath;
Around me stood the oaks and firs;
Over me soared the eternal sky,
Full of light and deity;
Again I saw, again I heard,
The rolling river, the morning bird—
Beauty through my senses stole;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole."*

CREED-MAKING

In the long course of civilization the human mind has been full of mental caricatures upon which men and women have formulated convictions, passed resolutions, created dogmas (and periodically butchered their neighbors). A very large part of this enormously tangled and twisted story of man's mental development has been wrapped up with his changing conceptions of My nature, and it is at this point that the story of his creeds touches My biography.

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*Emerson: "Each and All."

Creeds are full of fascinating interest, and any satisfactory analysis of them must start from human nature. They are the recorded lispings drawn from the infancy of man in an effort to express wisdom. Man seeks to explain My universe. As he comes down the centuries toiling and thinking, one finds him giving explanation after explanation. Each age has its favorite answers, ranging from meagre and half-starved fancies to majestic scientific data of great volume and strength. . . . Here is the drama of the unfolding mind. . . .

Behind every creed there lies some conflict—usually a bitter theological war waged by hosts of angry men who believed themselves to be champions of truths revealed directly from Me. A series of theological trenches cut their long lines across the battlefields of religion. In these dug-outs men mobilized their armies and waged their wars. "And war is not, everything considered, too harsh a word to characterize the long struggle; the sword of the spirit and the sword of the soldier were both in play, and neither went back to the scabbard unstained."*

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*Atkins: *The Making of the Christian Mind*, p. 118, New York, 1928.

After the bloody conflicts were over and the armistice signed, the victors sat down in holy convocation and established their ecclesiastical frontiers. Here they drew up doctrinal treaties of peace. These are the creeds.

No greater snares exist for man than his own words. . . . Not only is his language exceedingly rudimentary (and therefore as yet quite inadequate to express his ideas) but in addition to its limitations it is provokingly ambiguous. Then, of course, there is the law of change, whereby yesterday's expressions are rendered amazingly antiquated. By reason of shifts in race, temperament, climate, and Time itself, words frequently lose their meanings—and that so fast that a younger generation is often unable to make out clearly just what it was that so distressed its elders. "A study of the nature of language," recently wrote an American theologian, "brings convincing evidence of the evils which grow out of the attempt to rest in fixed formulas of truth, and reveals the necessity of constant restatement in order to serve the demands of life. . . . For the close relationships between language and meaning and our failure to make legitimate distinction, results always in some form of literalism. Literalism is the blunder of resting in the symbol and not pressing back to the thing symbolized. . . . Literalism, legalism, dogmatism, formalism,—they all belong to the same brood. They all mistake a form of expression for the deeper facts symbolized."*

Ignorant of these snares, mediæval man wove for himself a Noose of Words, and then in great awe he bowed his head directly into it. Much of the gist of theological folly may be found right here. At the opening of the nineteenth century a considerable section of humanity was still in this bent albeit reverent position. In all probability the average man would still be there worshipping his fictions were it not that the old rope has been cut.

With the rise of scientific knowledge, accuracy took the place of ambiguity, and instead of raising argument upon argument and opinion against opinion in a mass of verbal distortions, men came to feel the majesty of ascertained facts. And that is how Reason, long an outcast in the home of her children, was made the mother of progress.

IN DEFENSE OF MAN

Ancient mythologies, with but few exceptions, have taught that I made man a perfect being and endowed him free will. By the exercise of this will man soon got into trouble for, it is said, he disobeyed Me, whereupon in the heat of My anger I condemned him to a cursed life of penal servitude under the blighting shadow of death. This doctrine of disobe-

*Youtz: *The Enlarging Conception of God*, p. 76 f., New York, 1914.

dience and the consequent deterioration of humanity from some earlier existing state of happiness is known in theology as the doctrine of the Fall of Man.

Upon these "Fall" myths, which taught the idea of human debasement through a divine curse, mediæval theology succeeded in erecting an imposing Temple of dogma numbering among its supporting pillars such professions of faith as Total Depravity, Endless Torment and Infant Damnation. Within this sanctuary of Unreason men drew up indictments against the human race, in a desperate effort to impose upon themselves and posterity nothing short of a colossal slander. Except that this slander has been zealously perpetrated in My name and long upheld on the grounds of supposedly divine guarantees I should not hesitate to dismiss the entire subject with the ineffable silence born of that "perfect contempt [which] hath no voice."

But the sad history of this thought does not permit brushing it aside without some kind of an investigation of its enormous calumny against Me. Furthermore, it will serve the cause of true religion to make the pages of My biography lay bare this error. Distasteful as this procedure might be to those sensitive souls who dislike dragging the skeletons of theology from their sacred crypts, it must be remembered that a doctrine may be atheistic in virtue of what it says of man, no less than in virtue of what it says of Me!

Typical of all these myths (which to this very day, unfortunately, are still widely regarded as sober history) is the story of Adam and Eve living in a state of childlike innocence in the Garden of Eden. According to the Book of Genesis, I placed the first human pair in this saintly Paradise and forbade them to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, fearing lest they become as wise as I and thereby endeavor to share in My sovereignty. But woman—uncertain creature that she was—finally fell to the wiles of a Serpent, who is actually portrayed as speaking and disclosing an uncanny knowledge of My secrets. Finally, Eve tasted the seductive fruit and so did Adam, whereupon sin—ugly Sin!—arrived for the first time. And with sin man lost his perfection and was robbed of his primal felicity.

For several centuries this story, although lodged in early church tradition, received no disproportionate emphasis, until one day in a garden in Milan a passionate young pagan, struggling with his soul, seized upon it to explain his own moral condition and perturbed imagination. Looking "down into hideous gulfs of bottomless guile, into weltering abysses of insatiate lust,—and seeing the hells open,—hell underneath hell—in his darkling selfish heart," Augustine (he afterward became bishop of

Hippo) inferred from his own experience the total depravity of human nature.

No single theologian in all of Christendom ever left so wide or so deep or so morbid an impression on his fellow men as this early mediæval saint. At first he wavered between an allegorical and literal interpretation of the Genesis story, only in the end to decide in favor of the latter. As a result of this decision, he strengthened his conclusion in the utter depravity of the entire human race as constituting *massa peccati,* a lump of Sin. "God created man upright . . . but man, having of his own free will become depraved and having been justly condemned, begat a posterity in the same state of depravation and condemnation."* Thus it was not Adam and Eve alone who sinned against Me but, according to this theory, the disobedience of the primal pair and their consequent fall dragged down the whole of creation, thereby involving posterity in a terrible blight. It was with this Augustinian thought uppermost in his mind that Cotton Mather declared to his congregation, "Man's best works are a stench in God's nostrils."

That religion should come to teach that man is a reprobate, an incomprehensible monster set against all that is good and determined on all evil, is one of those amazing ironies that happens when theologians are under the spell of "literal" interpretations.

*Augustine: *De Civ. Dei,* XIII. 14.

It is indeed sad that some of the most able and learned theologians allowed themselves to fall into this trap. Calvin, Melanchthon, Luther, Knox and a vast host of lesser men were all corrupted by the foul thoughts that came bubbling up from the bottomless pit of Augustine's morbid theology.

The final eclipse of Augustinianism was brought about by the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859). With the rise of scientific thought it came to be seen that the Fall theory was not only a libel upon man's nature but a mistake concerning his history. The assumption of a primitive state of perfection from which there was a fall permanently affecting the destiny of mankind was now forever shattered. "By the teaching of evolution," wrote Rev. Samuel T. Carter, "it is a grotesque blunder to call man a fallen being. He is probably the best example of a rising being anywhere to be found. The one thing he has been doing for ages is to rise. He has risen from the merest microscopic life to glorious manhood—he has risen from the low, the bestial, the utterly selfish nature that eats its own progeny, to a high, wise, self-sacrificing, entirely devoted and inspired spiritual life, to becoming partaker of a divine nature, and sharing in a true sense the very life of God. . . . I can fancy some mighty angel telling his comrades the wondrous story of man's age-long rise, closing with the words: 'And he calls himself a fallen creature.' This must add to the hilarity of Heaven."*

It would be difficult to speculate on the amount of misery and unhappiness the Fall idea, as defined by Augustine and elaborated upon by Calvin, has caused sensitive souls through the centuries. The results have been monstrous, painful, and sad. It would be equally difficult to gauge the amount of positive harm this doctrine has done to man's sincere desire to know more of My nature. Fortunately for modern religion, all such crude ideas are being rapidly dropped. There is now going on a vast carting away of waste material that has long clogged spiritual progress. Realizing this, the modern philosopher of religion does not hesitate to declare that "the old assumption that men are by nature bad, that they love evil more than the good, is a vicious dogma of an outworn theology."†

ORIGINAL SIN

One cannot range through the vast theological literature of the ages and miss the tremendous rôle the concept of Sin has played in the heart and mind of humanity. Without any scientific knowledge of his own physical origin and utterly ignorant of the evolution of morality and conscience, man, pitifully unenlightened as he was, came to believe

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*Carter: *Wanted: a Theology*, p. 54, New York, 1909.

†Ames: *Religion*, p. 241, New York, 1929.

in Sin as the consequence of the initial rebellion against My laws perpetrated by Adam and his wife. Even as late as the nineteenth century John Henry Newman, with utter sincerity, could make the idea of an original Sin an integral part of his theology. "Since there is a God," so he writes in the *Apologia,* "the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. It is out of joint with the purposes of its Creator. This is a fact, a fact as true as the fact of its existence; and thus the doctrine of what is theologically called original sin becomes to me almost as certain as that the world exists, and as the existence of God."

Upon no single phase of man's life did theology presume to speak in My name with such convincing certitude as upon the nature of Sin. It pretended to know the whence and why of it, its hidden source and cause, its ultimate effects upon a passion-logged humanity. So strongly had theology indoctrinated the mind of man on this particular subject that Sin (even in its most abstract form) assumed a hideously effective reality, more horrible than the existence of witches, more repulsive than demons. For endless ages people willingly tortured themselves in the belief that men are naturally My enemies; that they are nothing more than "miserable sinners," despicable "worms of the dust"; that only as a man debases himself will he prove pleasing in My sight and thereby insure his prospects for post-mortem happiness in a heaven specially prepared for those who have escaped My wrath. "A natural man," wrote Jonathan Edwards, "is as full of enmity against God as any viper, or any venomous beast is full of poison."*

When modern theologians had sufficiently freed themselves from the shackles of mediævalism and began to study the doctrine of Sin they found it to be a complex of many strands, involving in more or less degree an intellectually indefensible and morally revolting idea of My activity. For centuries the notion was variously upheld that I created man with the purpose of wrecking him by a Fall—in order thereby to enhance My own glory! Before the fateful catastrophe Adam and Eve were paragons of excellence and intelligence who were subsequently reduced by Me to so low an estate that they transmitted to the entire human race an inescapable amount of guilt together with an hereditary bias toward all evil. "By this Sin," recites the Westminster Confession, "they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them

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*Edwards: *Men Naturally God's Enemies* (a sermon).

by ordinary generation. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions."

Just what original righteousness really is no one has been able to make out. It is an embarrassing problem: for "even if the supposition of original righteousness could be maintained it would be difficult to imagine how the transition from implanted goodness to actual sin could take its rise."* Still more puzzling is the thought that one act of sin, however momentous, could compel Me to derange the entire race of mankind.

But what has been even more difficult for intelligent men and women to understand is how, I, God and Father, would need to have My glory enhanced by tricking man into a Fall for which he must suffer terrible torments. To create the inhabitants of a world, to condition and circumstance them just as they were, with the full knowledge that they would be plunged headlong into sin, to exhibit in the face of all this not the least desire to act as their Protector—such a theory, if true, would reduce My activity to a plane below the moral decency of the average human being. For what ethicist will call a man moral who purposely places a temptation before an innocent creature? "I will call no being

*Tennant: *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, p. 27, London, 1908.

good (or just) who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow creatures," declared John Stuart Mill, with his soul in revolt against the theological attempt to moralize iniquity in My name—and he then proceeded to this bold but sensible position: "And if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell will I go!"

Equally sincere, if not quite so bold, is the quatrain of the "Rubaiyat" addressed to Me (and it would be unanswerably true if the old theology were correct):

"O Thou who man of baser earth did'st make,
And who with Eden did'st devise the snake,
For all the sin wherewith the face of man
Is blackened, man's forgiveness give and take."

PREDESTINATION

By tracing the origin of evil to the Fall of Man the question arose, "What was the cause of the Fall?" Man falls—so it was said—the providence of God so ordaining. Here was the answer! And here too was the theological doctrine of Predestination.

Because it was regarded as an affair of My providence the idea of Predestination became a matter of eternity—something I was supposed to have actually mapped out by Myself before the Fall took place. In fact, having arbitrarily destined certain elect souls to salvation and condemned the rest of mankind to perdition, the Fall was merely an instrument in My hands, a clever means of infecting with sin those whom I had already determined should be damned. "It was a horrible decree," declared John Calvin, "but none can deny that God foreknew the final fate of man before He created him, and that He foreknew it precisely because it was appointed by His own ordinance."

More than a thousand years before Calvin began to formulate his theology, that famous bishop of Hippo—St. Augustine—had already elaborated the main ideas of the Predestination dogma.

It came about in a very interesting way.

Augustine, who lived in North Africa, had an opponent in the person of a monk named Pelagius of the British Isles. The two men were as far apart in theology as they were separated in geography. More so. A man can more easily travel from London to Hippo than he can cross the tempestuous seas that lie between the doctrine of the freedom of the will and the opposite theory that flatly denies that such freedom exists.

One day Pelagius left England on a visit to Rome. His residence in the Eternal City was of a disturbing character: instead of being edified he was greatly shocked by the moral laxity of the Christians, which he attributed to the writings of Augustine, especially his *Confessions*. To arouse these lax believers Pelagius stressed the importance of individual responsibility and the freedom of the will.

Augustine apparently was not a meekly submissive theologian: he made his stand against Pelagius' doctrine and its insinuations. He became the vindicator-in-chief of the idea of man's inherently sinful state, the upholder of human depravity and helplessness, the assertor of "the predestination of souls to evil by the power of God."

Of course Augustine was by no means the first to entertain Predestination ideas. Many of his own thoughts were nothing more than elaborations upon the theology of St. Paul, whose epistles had long engaged his full attention. Paul had taught that the potter has the right, of the same lump of clay, to make vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor, and the lowly destined vessel can neither help it nor complain. "God"—so wrote this apostle—"hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth."* It was easy to infer from such language that I, by My foreknowledge, predestined some to damnation as others were predestined to salvation.

Echoes of Augustine's teaching reverberated through the theological writings of the Middle Ages. The general drift of the idea worked on with increasing cogency, for it was not only congenial to the mediæval way of thinking but it represented a logical outcome of the doctrine of Total Depravity, which looked upon men as almost entirely worthless, of no more value than the worm which crawls in the dust, conceived and born in sin, and doomed to eternal torment from which few could be saved. Here and there a protest was wrung out when a solitary thinker like John Scotus Erigena argued against predestination to evil on the philosophical grounds that such a belief implied a duality in My nature. But on the whole, Catholic as well as Protestant theologians clung tenaciously to the dogma with its salvation for the elect (meaning themselves) and damnation for the reprobates (meaning all others).

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*Romans 9:18.

In Geneva, where he had fled to escape the Inquisition, John Calvin while still a very young man erected a theological structure that far exceeded the rigor of St. Augustine's. Whereas the bishop of Hippo arrived at the thought of Predestination as the culmination of his doctrinal tenets, Calvin made it the starting point of all his thinking. "God of His own free will and pleasure, so ordains, that amongst men, some should be so born as to be devoted from the womb to certain death, who, by their destruction, might glorify His Name."*

According to Calvin the doctrine of Predestina-

Institutes, Book III, chap. 23.

tion implied a twofold decree: the election of those whom I like and the reprobation of those whom I dislike. Unto the elect the decree guarantees salvation; unto the reprobates the decree guarantees death and damnation. It is futile to argue just why I act this way. John Calvin cautioned his followers not to pry too deeply into My motives but to content themselves with the plain fact that reprobates are carefully prepared for damnation from the womb. It is true that I offer salvation to them, but it is to mock them; light is shed around them, but it is to blind them; the voice of mercy sounds in their ears, but it is to tantalize them. To be sure, I invite them to partake of heavenly bliss but it is only to thrust them down to the pit of destruction.

In pursuing these ideas to their rigorous conclusion Calvin, while talking of My divine justice, ended up in a description of superhuman cruelty. He proclaimed as "good news" the tidings that the greater portion of mankind is hopelessly lost, enshrouded in the inextinguishable smoke of hell. As for the reprobates, they cannot help themselves; they sin because they cannot avoid the necessity. Yet Calvin claimed that I would hold them responsible and no one will be excused for doing that which he is unable to resist doing. In short, the Genevan Reformer represented Me as condemning men for what they could not avoid, as commanding them to do what is both morally and physically impossible; and while the Scriptures are exhorting men to make their calling and election sure, according to Calvin, I have decreed from eternity, that no efforts, no repentance, no tears of contrition, no supplication to the throne of mercy, shall ever avail.*

Few people to-day read Calvin's *Institutes.* As a theologic breastwork of the sixteenth century it has crumbled most pitifully under the terrific blows dealt it by the advancing morality of Western civilization. Its mediæval structures, unable to defend themselves against modern cannonading, no longer darken the horizon of man's mind. Doubtless, a certain value will attach itself to this book as men delve deeper into psychological phenomena.

Already an explanation of Calvin's morbid theology has been suggested along the lines of his lifelong agonizing indigestion. Some have gone so far as to say that he clearly mistook his stomach-pains for cosmic speculations. A French book, published over a quarter of a century ago, on *The Maladies of Calvin* goes so far as to suggest a Jekyll-and-Hyde mystery, a kind of dual personality brought on by his physical ills, which rendered him mentally and therefore morally irresponsible during much of the most tragical part of his career. However these things may be, it is not likely—as an apologist once wrote—"that because one man at Geneva suffered from a torpid liver and chronic dyspepsia, superinduced by overtax of brain and non-exercise of body, a large part of Christendom was for some centuries shadowed by a creed of Fate and Gloom which probably no man now in his heart believes."

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*A good many people still live who remember the famous Sunday in the 'eighties when Henry Ward Beecher startled even Plymouth Church by his fierce denunciations of that idea which represents Me as having created millions of souls only to damn them. He declared the effect of the dogma of reprobation to be "to transform the Almighty into a monster more hideous than Satan; and I swear by all that is sacred that I will never worship Satan, though he should appear dressed in royal robes and sitting on the throne of Jehovah."

Let the psychologists explain Calvin as they will. Let his loyal apologists supply their answers. The fact remains that the doctrine of Predestination is in a very low, comatose state. The death-rattle may be expected within the next few years. When it finally dies no efforts will be made to give it a tombstone, for its dark side is too shocking to be viewed except with horror.

DAMNATION

One of the most revolting doctrines about Me that has ever darkened the mind of man is the terrific thought of divine damnation—frequently called the dogma of Endless Punishment.

According to the logic of Augustine and Calvin it follows that inasmuch as all human beings are born subject to the penalty of eternal hell only a fixed number are selected to escape; all others I purposely allow to roll on unhindered into the bottomless pit. As to the equity of this procedure, which glorifies a small body of arbitrarily chosen favorites, Augustine argued that it is a mystery which transcends the human mind because My ways are unsearchable and past finding out. Those whom I choose to damn have no right to complain; they are getting just what they deserve by reason of the original guilt of Adam, in whose loins all men have been pre-natally tainted. As for the "elect," they have every cause to be satisfied since the predestined arrangement assures them eternal bliss.

In his great work entitled *The City of God* Augustine devoted two books to prove that it is possible for Me by the exercise of My almighty power, to keep a physical body in endless existence in order to burn it. If left to itself the body would be quickly consumed by the fire, and there would be a correspondingly quick release from pain and suffering. But with this situation, Augustine said, I could not be satisfied. I re-create the same body in every instant of time and by causing the fire to burn without ceasing I am able to torture without limit. For every sin is an infinite offense because it is committed against My infinity. Only an everlasting misery can satisfy My honor. I am compelled to let the sinner know that no contrition will avail; I will harken to no prayers; nothing but a never-ending wretchedness is enough to appease My immortal personality.

But, it may be asked, what about infants, the newly-born ones, who have had no chance to sin? What is their theological status? In the Augustinian scheme nothing is more certain than the doctrine that a newly-born infant deserves eternal damnation at My hands on the mere ground that it is a human being—that is to say, because it inherits original guilt.

When it is asked how an innocent babe fresh from its mother's womb can be possessed of sin the answer is to be found in the thought of Concupiscence. Of man's disordered instincts the most violent is sex. Yet it is through this reproductive feeling that every child is born into the world. Augustine argued that inasmuch as sex is intrinsically sinful, it follows that the very act of begetting a child inevitably stains it with original sin. For that reason every human being born into the world is literally "born in sin." "There is no one free from defilement," runs the Septuagintal mistranslation of Job, "not even if his life has been but a day upon earth."*

Not until the birth of John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards does one find a theologian who could paint human nature blacker than St. Augustine. Having dipped their brushes in his pot, both Calvin and

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*It is interesting to know that of the five proof-texts that Augustine used to support his terrific dogma of original sin, three are mistranslations.

Edwards proceeded to add a few new colorings of their own. "Infants," declared Calvin, "bring their own damnation with them from their mother's womb; the moment they are born their natures are odious and abominable to God." Yet he made a distinction between the elect and non-elect: while the non-elect infants were supposed to be under My wrath, the "elect" had the good fortune of escaping doom.

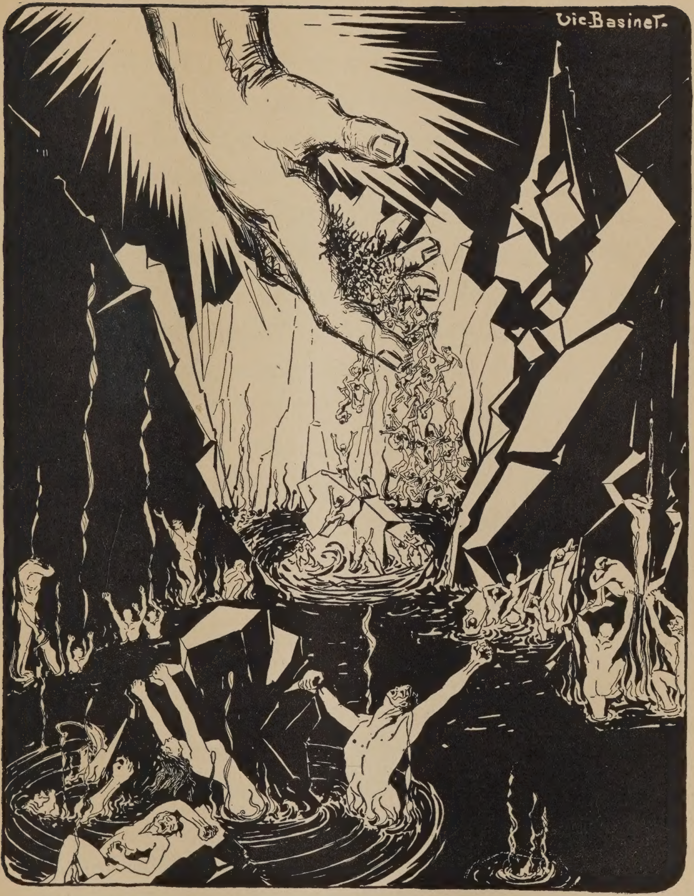
It is really astonishing how the older school of theologians could solicit men's reverence and worship for an infinitely cruel conception of Me, which deserved nothing but horror and scorn. It is said that a certain negro from Mississippi on hearing a strong Calvinistic sermon on infant damnation got down on his knees and prayed—"O thou great and unscrupulous God." The modern man, aware of the presumptuous nonsense of this doctrine, would be tempted to say the same thing, were endless damnation true. Only the mind that has freed itself from such doctrinal brutality could enjoy the light archness of Albert Lancaster's lines:

"An 'unelected infant' sighed out its little breath,
And wandered through the darkness along the shores of death
Until the gates of heaven agleam with pearl it spied,
And ran to them and clung there and would not be denied.
At last the gates were opened; a man with features mild
Stooped down and raised the weeping and unelected child.

Immortal light thrilled softly from avenues of bliss
As on the infant's forehead the spirit placed a kiss.
'Who are you, thus to hallow my unelected brow?'
'Dear child, my name was Calvin, but I see things better
now.' "

While it is undeniably true that the vast majority of modern theologians "see things better now," their forebears thoroughly enjoyed the caricatures that their own dark lanterns threw on the muddy walls of a limited comprehension. Otherwise how could they look at the spectacle of the damned, suffering in hell, and thrill with a glow of exhilaration? "The saints," declared Thomas Aquinas, "may enjoy their beatitude more thoroughly, and give more abundant thanks to God, when a perfect sight of the punishment of the damned is granted to them." When asked whether the blessed would not be saddened by seeing their nearest and dearest tortured in hell, Luther answered, "Not the least in the world." With characteristic zeal Jonathan Edwards was sure that "the view of the misery of the damned will double the ardour of the love and gratitude of the saints in heaven. . . ."

So dreadful was the mediæval conception of damnation, that for centuries men occupied their minds with working out various "plans" of escape. The broad idea of salvation was of course the one big mode, but it was entirely too large and too abstract for the ordinary man to grasp. A more practical and


Vic.Basinet.

DAMNATION

"The view of the misery of the damned will double the ardour of the love and gratitude of the saints in heaven."

mechanical solution—a merciful interposition—was finally evolved in the scheme of Indulgences.

The practice of giving indulgences was a development from the penitential system whereby offenders worked off the penalty of their offenses by following prescriptions laid down by priests and in penitential manuals. During the Crusades, the popes assumed the privilege of granting indulgences in the large. For example, in 1095, Urban II promised all taking part in the first crusade full pardon for their sins. During the second crusade, 1146, Eugenius III extended the offer of eternal life to the crusader's parents, and fifty years later, Innocent III went still further. It was a wide-spread belief that those who died fighting to recover the holy sepulchre would go immediately to Heaven.

So eager were the people to escape the penalty of hell that a huge traffic in these indulgences sprang up over Europe. They proved to be an inexhaustible source of obtaining funds from the public in the days before a bond issue could be floated. Oftentimes these moneys were used for improvements like bridge-building or road-making; frequently they were employed to repair hospitals and churches. Occasionally, however, they were diverted from worthy purposes to some private pocket in order to finance schemes for personal ambition.

With the growth of its abuse the more spiritually-minded leaders of the Church began to complain against the Indulgence traffic. Long before Luther nailed his theses on the door, there were loud protests. The idea that popes are able to "clear men of pain and sin both in this world and the other, so that when they die, they flee to heaven without pain" was held up to ridicule. "If the pope," so ran the argument, "destroys punishment, he also destroys sin, for the two go together and sin lasts as long as punishment and no longer."

Because the atmosphere of Europe had long been "soaked with the indulgence poison" it was difficult to keep the iniquity within bounds. When Martin Luther appeared on the scene in Germany, there was probably no more active business than the barter of pardons. The liberality with which these benefits were handed out is shown in the little manuals of devotion which were being circulated in the fifteenth century. A prayer made to St. Anne three times, secured a pardon of a thousand years for mortal offenses and twenty thousand years for venial misdoings. Eighty thousand years of indulgence, according to the *Soul's Garden,* accrued to those who offered a certain prayer to Mary. The last offering and other offerings of the kind were made upon the basis of Bulls issued by Alexander VI and Julius II. In Holland the impudence of the traffic almost exceeded belief. A graduated scale was printed, giving the prices for which crimes could be atoned. Poisoning was excused for eleven ducats, six livres; incest for three ducats and thirty-six livres; perjury for seven livres and three carlyns. Murder, if not by poison, was cheaper.

While belief in indulgences still sways millions of minds it is gratifying to see how completely the belief in the perpetuity of misery has been discarded. "The worst sin that was ever sinned," declared R. J. Campbell, "does not deserve everlasting punishment, and I have never yet met the Christian who would really and truly be willing to see a fellow creature undergo it. There is no understandable sense in which justice could demand such a terrible sentence, even if it involved no more than everlasting unhappiness; how much more unthinkable it becomes if the punishment is to be everlasting, fiendish torment!"*

ATONEMENT THEORIES

Because of an excessive preoccupation with the problem of Sin men have evolved throughout time a

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*Campbell: *The New Theology*, p. 202, New York, 1907. Less than a hundred years ago Lord Westbury of the English Privy Council reversed the decision of the Ecclesiastical Court which sentenced several clergymen to be suspended for having contributed liberal articles to Rev. Baden Powell's book on the *Evidences of Christianity*. As Lord Chancellor, Westbury pronounced the judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which held, among other things, that it is not essential for a clergyman to believe in *eternal punishment*. This prompted the following epitaph on Lord Westbury: "Towards the close of his earthly career he dismissed Hell with costs and took away from Orthodox members of the Church of England their last hope of everlasting damnation."

multitude of related religious conceptions that may be classified under the general heading of atonement. Used in its strict sense, the word *Atonement* (At-one-ment) means a reconciling or bringing together of two existences which have become estranged.

It was only natural, on the basis of an anthropomorphic outlook, that men should believe it necessary to placate My anger. The sense of sin, lurking as a ghostly terror, left no peace in their minds until the supposed offense against Me had been wiped out. Seeking to win My favor as slaves of a master, they built altars on which to slaughter victims, and as the flame ascended and the cloud of incense rolled they felt happy in the thought that I had been conciliated. Sacrifices were not the only kind of expiations offered to Me: fastings, prayers, penances, incantations and other methods were devised to assuage My wrath. Among certain peoples, such as the ancient Babylonians, there existed a huge network of religious magic by which the sinner could achieve the desired atonement.

Leaving the world of antiquity, with its blood and reeking altars, the idea of atonement came to be lodged in the death of Jesus. The early Christians had of course been accustomed to various sacrificial systems. Whether as pagans or Jews these notions had long been integral with their feelings and thoughts. It was therefore inevitable, considering the intellectual climate of the period, that the followers of the Nazarene should look upon his crucifixion as a sacrifice. Out of this *milieu* there grew up the belief that in some mysterious manner Christ had been the all-satisfying victim, that in his death there was a complete propitiation of My age-long anger. Briefly stated, it came to be the teaching of the churches that sin entered the world through disobedience of Adam; that in the course of time somebody had to atone for this original Sin (and all the subsequent depraving effects that initial Sin has had on his corrupt descendants); that for this supreme reason I sent Jesus into the world, having chosen him as the innocent lamb to be slain, so that his death on the cross might pay the world's debt to Me. Stated in the language of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Faith: "Christ suffered to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men"; and "the offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone."

Without any attempt to lessen the ghastliness of this appalling doctrine, it may be said that each age—according to its own best understanding—endeavored to arrive at a satisfactory theory as to why I should have demanded the death of Jesus as a blood-sacrifice. Beginning with the very early Christian centuries people held the grotesque notion that the death of jesus was a bargain carried on with the Devil. According to this very crude theory Satan had taken possession of humanity and held it captive. There was some dispute as to whether the Devil had a legal right to his prey, but there was no question that he had possession of it, and possession, as the lawyers say, is nine points of the law. In order to get mankind out of the clutches of the Devil it became necessary for Me to drive a sharp bargain. For that reason I offered to him My only begotten Son, who would act as a ransom for human souls. Without any hesitancy Satan accepted My offer, thinking he would thereby have Christ placed forever in his power. But—and this is the rub—Satan did not know that Christ was a divine being; and so by this clever manœuvre, he was completely outwitted: Christ slipped through his grasp when the gates of hell opened before the power of his resurrection. Thus having escaped to Heaven, My son was able to make Satan the loser all around. (For Satan had already given man up by accepting Christ's death as the ransom-price, and then lost Christ too because Jesus could not be held fast by the bonds of death.)

Fully a thousand years had passed by before the theologians began to discard the Ransom Theory. Augustine, in the fifth century, was scandalized by it; but his own views on the subject of the Atonement were entirely too philosophical for the masses to understand. It was by Anselm of Canterbury, at the end of the eleventh century, that a new theory was given. In his famous treatise *Cur Deus Homo?* he exploded the monstrous notion that I, God of the Universe, was under a formal obligation to recognize the claims of the Devil. Instead of having Jesus pay a ransom to Satan, Anselm declared that it was paid to Me.

Living in the very depths of the mediæval world it is not at all surprising that Anselm's discussion of the Atonement should have been modelled on the feudal conception of government. He pictured Me as a Suzerain Lord demanding satisfaction. Now, a feudal sovereign demands satisfaction when his honor has been injured. Accordingly, Anselm argued that by his death on the cross Jesus satisfied My honor which had been injured by man's disobedience and sin. In this way the debt to My divine justice was liquidated. Sinners may now be saved, since Jesus atoned for the sins of all by being a "substitute" for every merited punishment:

"Rich were the drops of Jesus' blood
Which calmed God's frowning face,
That sprinked o'er the burning throne
And turned the wrath to grace."*

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*Isaac Watts.

With the abandonment of the old demonology and with the decay of feudalism the Ransom Theory of the early Church Fathers and the Satisfaction Theory of Anselm were both swept into the limbo of discredited beliefs. Other theories had to be shaped from time to time in order to take the place of the old.* These in turn have held the stage of interest only to fade out into darkness, for no theological dogma is more obviously a relic of savage paganism than the thought that Jesus suffered dreadful pains, inflicted by Me, to atone for the sins of humanity.

It would be exceedingly unfair and misleading to overlook the splendid efforts now being made by intelligent Christians to overcome the gruesome and horrifying notions about Me wrapped up in the crucifixion-atonement idea. Typical of the many honest protests now being wrung from the enlightened pulpits of Christendom one may take these paragraphs of A. Maude Royden:

> To many people the Atonement still means simply this: that God is angry with the whole human race; that his anger demands a victim, a sacrifice, a "propitiation"; and that he could only be satisfied when Jesus Christ offered himself as that victim and, by an agonising death, atoned for all the sins that he had never committed.
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> This frightful doctrine is still preached, and even preachers who are willing to soften it down a little cling to the idea that the wrath of God (or "divine justice") demanded

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*For a brief but scholarly review of these various theories see *The Doctrine of Atonement*, by J. K. Mozley, New York, 1916.

some victim, and that we are only forgiven because Christ offered himself as that victim. We are "saved by the blood of the Lamb." The idea of substitution (i. e., of the punishment of an innocent person for the guilty) is not abandoned.

It is, nevertheless, an idea so abhorrent to our sense of justice that it must be abandoned.*

There are millions of people in the world to-day who have so long been taught sacrificial paganism that they would rather be atheists than think I had nothing to do with the crucifixion. It will take a long while for them to outgrow the butcherous idea of blood-atonement. In the meantime those who are intelligent will have to try to educate their fellow men to a less bloody way of looking at Me.

TRINITY

In the academic shades of Greece—centuries before the birth of Jesus—the celebrated Athenian philosopher, Plato, began teaching his disciples a system of knowledge concerning My universe.

It was a part of his method to discuss My divinity in terms of a triad, or trinity of hypostases. According to the Platonic arrangement the first element was called *Tò Agathon,*—the Supreme Good; the second was named *Logos* or *Nous,*—Mind or Intellect; the third was designated *Psyche,*—Soul. Not for one moment did the Platonists suppose that their

*Royden: *I Believe in God*, p. 181.

three archical hypostases were separate creatures, but, on the contrary, they asserted their essential interdependence. Thus they conceived the second hypostasis, the Logos, to be dependent on the other two. As the splendor of the light is indivisible from the sun, so these philosophers argued that the three hypostases of their trinity were absolutely indivisible and inseparable.

All popular theologies have at some time employed the numerical system. For that reason only a few choice souls here and there have been strong enough to achieve a release from this type of anthropomorphism.

Ancient Egypt was full of trinities, even before the Greek philosophical influence had percolated into its borders. It was the habit of the priests on the Nile to arrange their gods and goddesses in groups of three. There was, for example, the trinity of Amen the father, Mut the mother and Khonsu the son; also the trinity of Osiris, Isis, and Horus; Khnum, Satis, and Anukis. . . .

Far to the east of Egypt the priests in Babylonian temples formed triads of their deities—the earliest of these was that of Anu, Enlil, and Ea. But there were others too, such as Sin, Shamash, and Ishtar.

India also had her Hindoo trinity representing Me with one body but with the three faces of Brahma, Siva and Vishnu. And, in addition to that triadic form, she had Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, the three Holy ones of Buddhism (Buddha stands for that which is revealed, Dharma for the medium of revelation, and Sangha for the outcome in human life).

But it was Egypt (not India), already under the strong sway of Platonic philosophy, that influenced Christianity on this subject. For here the simple doctrines of the young religion came in contact with minds imbued with Greek metaphysical subtleties. Platonic converts to Christianity applied the principles of their old philosophy to their new faith.

There were three steps in the historical development whereby the notion of Trinity became a fixed belief in Western civilization. At first the early Christians paid their devotions to Me as "Father," that being the term so generally employed by Jesus. Very soon, Jesus was called "Son." This was done at first in the Rabbinical sense (quite free from any theological or dogmatic significance), and then afterward it was applied literally.* Jesus at no time claimed divinity for himself. However, "he allowed himself to be called by others, the Son of God; but to Jewish ears this did not imply Godhead. The Son of God meant simply the promised Messiah, and, various as were the current ideas about the Messiah,

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*See Abelson: *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature*, p. 163 f., London, 1912.

no Jew thought of the Messiah as actually God or as equal with God . . . never as God Himself."*

Shortly after he died, a new religion sprang up around the radiant life and teachings of this noble Man of Nazareth. As the Christian movement spread out into the world of Greek philosophy the original Jewish ideas underwent profound change. It could not have been otherwise. Gradually, step by step, the formulæ of the early Church, couched in highly metaphysical language, ascribed full divinity to him who never once in his own lifetime said, "I am God." Of course, these doctrines did not say that Jesus claimed to be divine. The function of the formula was to make that claim for him in view of his own silence on the matter.

This popular elevation of Jesus to divine honors gave rise to the most momentous theological struggle in the history of early Christianity, for it now became necessary to take steps which would prevent the Church from drifting into polytheism. Many Christians were frankly believing, to use the exact words of Justin Martyr, that Jesus was "the second God." It was out of this clash of ideas about Me and My relationship to the Nazarene that the famous Council of Nicæa (325 A. D.) was called, to decide the issues. After a long and stormy session Arius was condemned and Athanasius triumphed. "It was like

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*Rashdall: *Jesus Human and Divine*, pp. 37–38, London, 1922.

a battle fought in the dark," wrote an eyewitness, "for neither party seemed at all to understand on what ground they vilified each other."

The outcome was a creed—dark, wordy, and confused. In it Jesus was now declared to be fully and completely divine—an expression of My incarnation (and not a semi-divine phantom hovering between Godhood and Manhood as Arius had maintained). The official language of the decree now stated, Jesus "is of the substance of the Father, God of God, and Light of Light, very God of very God"—and then it hastened to add full penalties and pains for all who rejected the idea.

With this relationship between Myself as *Father* and Jesus as *Son* worked into the rigid form of a creed, there remained the final stage of adding a third person who had long been called the Holy Ghost, a kind of shadowy satellite which is described in the language of the Council of Constantinople (A. D. 381) as an emanation, being "the Lord, and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified."

It was an age of deep enmities and gross uncertainties; men ran riot with dogma. With overwhelming arrogance they presumed to speak out what is unspeakable and circumscribe the exact conditions of salvation. As an example of how mediæval thinkers entangled themselves in the exalted allurements of a profound obscurity, endeavoring thereby to "clarify" My being, the following sentences from the *Quicunque Vult* (sometimes called the Athanasian Creed) may be reviewed:

> Whosoever would be saved must above all hold the Catholic faith, which except a man have kept whole and inviolate, he shall without doubt perish eternally.
>
> Now the Catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in a Trinity and a Trinity in a Unity, neither confusing the persons nor separating the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Spirit, but of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit the divinity is one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.
>
> As the Father is, such is the Son, and such the Holy Spirit. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, and the Holy Spirit is uncreated. The Father is infinite, the Son is infinite, and the Holy Spirit is infinite. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, and the Holy Spirit is eternal, and yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal, just as there are not three uncreated nor three infinites, but one uncreated and one infinite. Likewise the Father is omnipotent, the Son is omnipotent, and the Holy Spirit is omnipotent, and yet there are not three omnipotents, but one omnipotent.
>
> So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods, but there is one God. So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Spirit is Lord, and yet there are not three Lords, but there is one Lord. For just as we are compelled by Christian truth to confess each person singly both God and Lord, so by the Catholic religion we are forbidden to speak of three Gods or Lords.
>
> The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created,

but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son, not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. There is therefore one Father, not three Fathers, one Son, not three Sons, one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. And in this Trinity there is no earlier or later, no greater or less, but the whole three persons are coeternal and coequal with each other; so that in all things, as is aforesaid, both a Trinity in a Unity and a Unity in a Trinity is to be worshipped. Let him, therefore, who would be saved think thus of the Trinity.

Each generation has its own categories of thought and so it was inevitable that any doctrine about Me written in the Dark Ages would bear the imprint of these times. If the mood of the twentieth century is singularly impatient with such starry remoteness it is because the modern man is no longer dazzled by metaphysical jugglery or verbal festoons. (He is utterly unmindful of the caution not to confound the persons of the Trinity nor yet divide the substance.) . . . And so it is that the serious theological literature of one age is often dismissed as outworn and valueless by the next.

BEYOND CONFUSION

The twentieth century should not believe for one moment that the men who formulated this doctrine were unreasonable or irrational. On the contrary, they were earnest-minded seekers in quest of the solution of a problem which they honestly believed was of immense practical significance. The concept of Three in One best suited the religious and intellectual needs of those dark times; and if the world has since so completely changed, it is not that the doctrine of the Trinity was an unnecessary manufacture of mediæval metaphysics. As the intelligent thinker casts a backward glance over the travelled roads of civilization he will doubtless feel that the great historic creeds are "fossils" of human thought. And he will be correct, provided there is added to that feeling the sympathetic understanding that a fossil is an impressive memorial of a life once within the shell.

With its instinctive conservatism, the growth of theology is frequently held back when it is made the stronghold of ideas about Me elsewhere extinct. Notwithstanding the vast intellectual progress of the last two hundred years it is still difficult for modern theologians to escape the traditional influence and weight of fossilized ideas. Unfortunately these are accepted with polite acquiescence, following Samuel Butler's observation that human ideas are like the human organism, "they will stand a vast amount of modification if it is effected slowly and without shock but the life departs out of them, leaving the form of an idea without the power thereof, if they are jarred too rudely."*

*Butler: *God the Known and God the Unknown*, p. 24. Yale University Edition.

However, it cannot be denied that men are bound to use such terms as they have and to employ such symbols as will best represent to them My infinity. At bottom, the idea of the Trinity merely represents an effort to explain the multiplicity of My Unity. Brahmanism symbolized this thought rather cleverly when it evolved those many-limbed gods that now appear so grotesque to the modern mind. In common with other religions of antiquity the early Christians, after many long and weary theological debates, chose the concept of Three in One as best suited to their own way of thinking. . . .

It is a mark of growing intelligence that men are coming to realize that, as words and numbers may serve as liberators of ideas, they may just as easily become their jailers, particularly if an unwise dogmatism joins them in marriage and ties the ideas they represent in a lovers' knot. Speaking for this class of thinkers Dr. B. H. Streeter of Oxford delivers himself in this wise:

> And no symbol is fitting which does not suggest a mystery inscrutable—beyond logic, beyond conception, beyond imagination. Such a symbol, saturated through age-long use with worshipping associations, is the Three in One and One in Three, a symbol arithmetically absurd, representatively apt.*

Occasionally there appears some one whose eyes are clear and not hallucinated, one who fully under-

*Streeter: *Reality*, p. 214, London, 1926.

stands that I cannot be bound down to numbers or lassoed within a definition. It was against the common human tendency to run My vastness into a numerical mould that George Burman Foster boldly inveighed when he asked his brethren in faith: "Is not God beyond our human number-system and therefore as little *one* as *three?"**

Of course, it will take many generations of further mental development before theologians will be able to extricate themselves from the verbal bewilderments of their forebears. It is by no means an easy task for man to disentangle the element of truth from the admixture of delusion. For that very reason humanity is slow to bid adieu to those conceptions of Me which, while painfully antiquated, are still tenderly cherished because of their age-long associations.

MARY

Had the early Christian theologians continued to expand their conception of My nature they would have doubtless included Mary, for it is quite obvious that the Trinity is incomplete in that no female principle is represented therein. To overcome this grave omission, and at the same time afford a pleasant concession to pagan converts, who were bringing into the Church memories of various rituals to such female divinities as Isis and Cybele, it was finally necessary to elevate Mary far above all mortals and place her directly next to the three persons of the Trinity.

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*Foster: *The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence,* p. 140, Chicago, 1909.

For almost two thousand years the story of Mary has formed an interesting chapter in My biography if for no other reason than that men have called her "The Virgin Mother of God." Just as the personality of the Nazarene was split in twain by making a "Christ of theology" in contradistinction to the "Jesus of history," so men transformed the wife of a humble carpenter into a virgin goddess. "We know," once wrote the German scholar Friedrich Delitzsch, "how the church subsequently and with absolute consistency not only adored the Virgin Mary as the immaculately conceived 'Bride of the Holy Spirit' and 'Mother of the divine Son,' but, when the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were declared to be consubstantial and coeternal, also raised the Virgin to be the 'Mother of the Creator' and then without qualification the 'Mother of God,' and paid her what was practically divine worship as the 'mightiest Queen of heaven and earth,' the 'Queen of the Angels.' "*

This veneration of Mary, so utterly foreign to the spirit of Jesus or his disciples, was largely influenced

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*Delitzsch: *Whose Son is Christ?* (Eng. trans.), p. 48, Boston, 1908.

by those powerful myths that clustered around the pagan goddess Isis (particularly because Isis-worship was popular and wide-spread throughout Europe). The cult of this goddess coming from Egypt was introduced into Rome in the first century before the birth of Christ. When Christianity arrived in Italy her temples already dotted the land far and wide. From Italy her adoration spread all over Western Europe. So mighty was her influence that it reached as far as London, a shrine having been built there to her honor.

The worship of Isis glided by perceptible degrees into that of Mary, the attributes of the heathen goddess passing over to the Blessed Mother of the new religion. What made Isis popular was a twofold representation: first, as the Lady of Sorrows weeping for the dead Osiris; and secondly, as the divine mother nursing her infant Horus. Thousands of statuettes and paintings have been found by archæologists showing Isis holding the divine child in her arms. It was this representation of the holy mother that Christianity took over; the paintings and figures that had belonged to Isis and Horus now became the Madonna and the Child.

Of course, Mary did not become the "Mother of God" without a long and bitter struggle. Many Christian theologians, such as Epiphanius, denounced the practice of worshipping her. But it was all in vain, for polytheistic influences were too strong. The very phrase, Mother of God—*theotokos*—assured her the status of a goddess to whom formal invocations were to be offered. Those churchmen who, like Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, rejected this fanciful epithet were pronounced enemies of Christianity and subjected to persecution.

With the rise of Mary to divine power the imaginations of mediæval men began to frolic in the most extravagant fashion. St. Bonaventura spoke of her as "the golden bed on which God, weary of His labor, lay down for repose." St. Bernard exclaimed: "If you are terrified by the thunders of heaven, go to Jesus, and if you fear Jesus, then run to Mary. She will show her breasts to the Son and win his compassion, as the Son shows his wounded side to the Father." With such intercessory powers at her command the Tridentine Catechism declared that the efficacy of Mary's prayers are so wonderful in turning away My anger that it is "most wicked to doubt it."

The theological notions concerning Mary have long been a sharp dividing line between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. On the one hand the Catholics, elevating her by the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, teach "the blessed Virgin Mary to have been from the first instant of her conception through a singular grace and privilege of Almighty

God . . . preserved free from all taint of original sin."*

Apparently this speculation has proved entirely too distasteful to Protestants. To them the Roman figure of Mary is frankly regarded as an ecclesiastical fiction which has grown with the centuries until it was turned into a dogma by the arbitrary utterance of Pius IX.

Dear Mary! I remember her as a hard-working Jewish girl who was married to an impoverished carpenter by the name of Joseph. With all the delicate sweetness of a true mother she brought up a typically large oriental family that was not over-appreciative of her difficulties. Her oldest son, Jesus, left home when Mary was a widow and shortly thereafter was crucified. . . . Considering what this little woman went through, it is one of the supreme ironies of history that men still call her the "Mother of God."

INCARNATIONS

There floated nebulously in the minds of men, centuries before Christianity began to present Jesus as an outright incarnation, the idea that I frequently assumed the form of a human being. Almost every civilization of antiquity was touched by various shades of the incarnation belief.

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*Quoted from the papal Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, wherein Pope Pius IX declared that this dogma had been "revealed" to him by Me.

In ancient Egypt—a hotbed of such thought—the notion of divinity assuming a material form seemed to be the logical outcome of certain basic religious conceptions. The Egyptians, for example, could not think of My divinity in any abstract or transcendental manner. Only as a concrete existence was I at all conceivable. For that reason earthly attributes were ascribed to their deities. Divine beings had to eat and drink; they must see with eyes and hear with ears. What was still more important was the thought that no deity could exercise his power at a particular place unless he had a material body as a vesture or embodiment, something he could put on or off for shorter or longer periods.

It was chiefly in their reigning king that the people on the banks of the ancient Nile found their incarnations. For who was closer to Me than Pharaoh? And did not his subjects believe that he ruled by divine right? They also believed that this right was something inherent in the royal person not merely because he was clothed with authority and power but chiefly because he was the incarnate form of a particular deity. Alone of all the Egyptians he owed his divine nature to the mysterious fact that he had been begotten of a god.

On the banks of the Ganges, incarnation ideas have enjoyed still longer centuries of unbroken popularity. Under the name of Vishnu the Hindus have worshipped Me not so much in My own person as in some of My supposed incarnations. Foremost among these are Krishna and Rama—but there have been many other avatars too numerous to mention here in detail.

In the *Ramayana* books, which deal with the life and deeds of Rama, the essentially human character of this epic hero is portrayed in those chapters which constitute the original story. Here Rama is described as a good man, a dutiful son to his parents and a loving husband to his wife. Occasionally he falls short of this model morality when, for example, he perfidiously killed Vali. But, on the whole, Rama stood for what was best in Indian thought. He battled valiantly against demon races and contended with superhuman beings represented as monkeys and bears. No wonder the popular mind imagined this hero to be a god. Once men arrived at this idea it became a comparatively easy task for the theologians to change the human Rama into an incarnation of divinity. That they successfully did so is attested by the new features they added to the older Ramayana writings.

And so it was with Krishna,—the chief avatar of Vishnu. In the oldest epic, Krishna was the leader of a herdsmen tribe called the Yadavas. What with fighting gory battles with demonic powers and loving his women, he was regarded as purely human, with characteristics essentially those of a Rajput ruler. Notwithstanding, there came a day when Krishna was believed to be supernatural. Upon that day he was absorbed into the godhead; and from that time on he has been considered the East Indians' most important incarnation of Me.

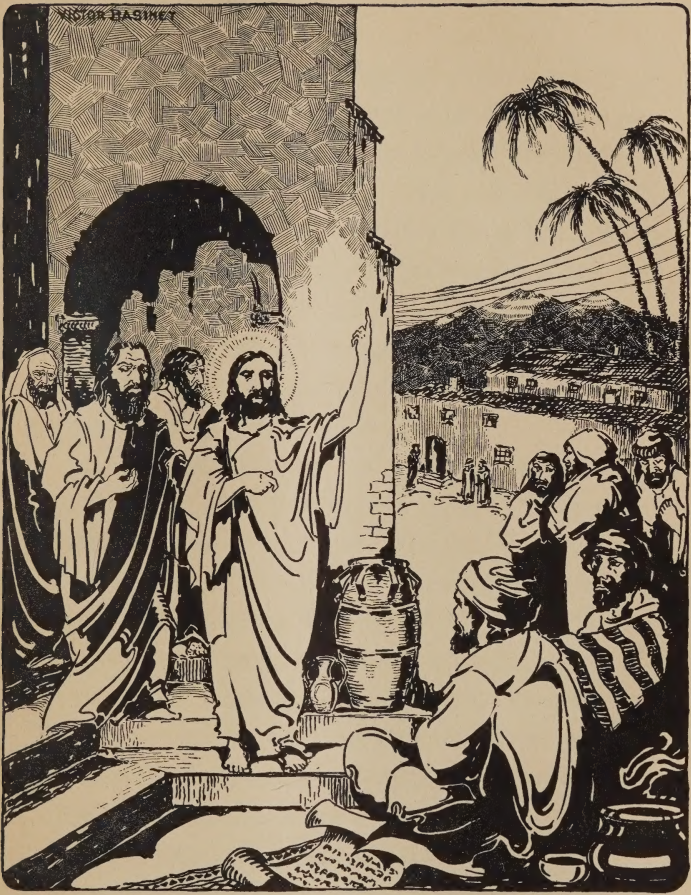
So popular has the avatar theory grown on Indian soil that even to-day a local saint whose fame shows any signs of increase is sure to be beatified by a legend purposely fabricated to present him as an avatar of some god.

Far over the Himalayan mountains to the north of India there lies Lhasa, the sacred city of Tibet. It is really an ecclesiastical capital ruled by those priest-kings called the Lamas. Since the days of the ruler Lo-bzang Gya-mts'o (A. D. 1615–1682) every Lama is supposed to be My incarnation. As the supreme earthly ruler of Tibet the Lama is "that devilish God-the-Father who puts to death all such as refuse to adore him."

Several centuries before Lo-bzang popularized the incarnation fiction in Tibet, there lived a Sufi leader in the Persian city of Bistam. Bayazid was his name. Because he was essentially a mystic, Bayazid taught that man was closely related to divinity. So strong was this belief and so persistent were his various mystical and ascetic practices that one day Bayazid broke forth into an expression of pantheistic extravagance. "Of a truth," declared Bayazid of himself, "I am God. There is no God beside me. Give homage unto me! Glory be unto me! How great is my majesty!"

In the Buddhist gospel is the record of an incarnation that has many remarkable parallels to the Christian doctrine concerning Jesus. Buddhism teaches that I made an appearance on earth by taking up my abode in the man Sakyamuni who was born at Kapilavastu. In fact it was just this personal manifestation on My part that turned Sakyamuni into the Buddha, so that Infinite Reason stooped to become flesh and dwell among men.

Of course all this did not happen overnight. First a cult had to spring up which could preserve the essential teaching. So it happened that "hand in hand with this development of the cult there went a corresponding transformation in the conception of the Founder. During his later years he seems to have been regarded by his faithful disciples as the source of all authority and as possessing unfathomable and all-inclusive knowledge, yet subject still to the limitations of a human body. So he was remembered by those who had known him in the flesh. But when the last of these had followed him into Parinirvana, his form took on larger and more supernatural proportions. No longer joined to a body, he came to have a place in the cosmic scheme which


VICTOR BASINET

INCARNATION

. . . and Bayazid of Bistam said: "Of a truth, I am God. There is no God beside me. Give homage unto me! Glory unto me! How great is my majesty!"

it is hard to suppose he himself would have accepted."*

In addition to all this, legend surrounded Buddha's birth and enlightenment with miracles, signs and wonders. He descended from the Tusita heaven to become incarnate in the womb of Maya. His knowledge is omniscient; his word infallible. He is now accessible at all times to his disciples, and the purpose of his self-revelation is that they may become partakers of his divine nature. Adoration is directed to him by prayer, by study of the scriptures, by meditation in holy places.

In Christian theology the incarnation idea followed closely upon the death of Jesus. This does not mean that the early Jewish disciples deified Jesus. That would have been utterly abhorrent to them. They had known the Nazarene in the flesh—he was to them a man among men. But with the arrival of Paul on the Christian stage a new feature was added. Paul went far beyond the little band of original Palestinian disciples by extending the category of deity to include Christ himself.

Many centuries after Paul, it will be remembered, Anselm, the famous theologian, wrote his treatise *Cur Deus Homo?*—Why God Was Made Man. It was an elaborate attempt to reason out the meaning of the Christian incarnation. For its day and age

*Pratt: *A Pilgrimage to Buddhism*, p. 100, New York, 1929.

it marked an admirable advance over the older theology. But the question which troubled Anselm no longer disturbs his brothers of the twentieth century. Instead of trying to solve the problem how I was made man in Palestine about two thousand years ago present-day scholars are eager to know more about the very opposite—how man was made God!

The answer to this question may be found, in a large measure, in the human craving for the immediate presence of deity. There is an incessant demand in man's heart that divinity be not far off. "The importance of this theory is obvious," wrote Professor George Foot Moore of Harvard, "it gave men gods who were truly and completely human, who contended and suffered in men's behalf; gods who could be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, because they were tried in all points as we are; gods whom men could not only revere across the awful distance between finite and infinite, but love, as they loved their fellows, and be assured of God's responsive love."*

Of course there *is* a sense in which incarnation is true not of any one man exclusively, be he Krishna, Buddha or Jesus, but of man universally. Humanity is the susceptible organ of the Spirit; and that spiritual light which dwells in man and forms his higher

*Moore: *History of Religions*, Vol. I, p. 330, New York, 1913.

life is "of one substance" with Me. The little doctrines of special incarnations are paltry over against the greater idea that the universe is one stupendous incarnation of Me:

> "All are parts of one stupendous whole
> Whose body nature is, and God the soul."

HEAVEN AND HELL

Ever since the imagination of man began to occupy itself in drawing pictures of a post-mortem life it has been an important function of his theology to create a literal heaven and a literal hell.

In this scheme of things I was invariably pictured as a severe magistrate, a kind of celestial policeman dealing out retributive justice. With a pair of moral scales in My hands I acted in the administrative capacity of Paymaster. Each person could expect to be rewarded in one direction or the other; for I had the reputation of writing down in a big book of remembrance all kinds of microscopic failings.

A literal heaven and a literal hell were the natural results of man's anthropomorphic ideas of My divinity. Into his heaven he wrought all those things that he enjoyed on earth. The "Western Paradise" of Chinese Buddhism is a typical oriental heaven filled with shining jewels and treasures, dotted with beautiful groves and fragrant trees where the birds sing their songs. Every place is adorned with lotus flowers. All sin, strife, and pain have disappeared and while the most wonderful music fills the ears, one can rest in peace in the shadow of the trees by the quietly flowing rivers.

While in the Koran less attention is given to heaven than to hell, there are some passages in which its delights are dwelt upon. In the Paradise promised to the pious, there are rivers of water without corruption, and rivers of milk the taste whereof changes not, and rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of honey clarified. The Mohammedan heaven is not the kind that a modern man would call spiritual. Nevertheless it was admirably pictured to suit the physical desires of the Prophet's followers: luscious gardens of fruits and running streams, with delightful nooks in which are the *houris,* or damsels, the principal reward of the righteous.

In Western countries the imagery is slightly changed but in all essentials it is about the same. There is bliss in heaven and freedom from all work. To enjoy themselves and while away the long hours men and women play upon golden harps. They emit a celestial harmony supposed to make up for the discords the saints encountered while sojourning on earth.

And speaking of harps!—they are such lovely and graceful things that I don't wonder that mediæval man placed them in heaven. But think of radio! Suppose the old Greeks had known about sound-transmission? Imagine what an influence that would have exerted on Christian theology? The Church Fathers would have considered the idea of the Logos puerile and childish in comparison to the majesty of radio. In all probability the Athenians would have referred to Me as the Grand Announcer, with large throngs of people gathering into the Temple of the Microphone to listen to supernatural messages. Surely under such conditions St. Paul could not have effectively chided the men of Athens for worshipping the Unknown God. The Athenians would have hotly declared that as the Hebrews worship the crude Yahweh they worship the up-to-date Radio. Perhaps Paul would have been taken to a sumptuous Temple service where, out of a box, there issued a living voice. Ah!—it would have been declared—God speaks in Greek, not Hebrew, which proves that Greek is the language of heaven.

As men pictured Me presiding over the bliss of heaven, they pictured the Devil presiding over the fires of hell. Here and there a few people really understood the symbolism of the two places typifying to the imagination the prevailing power of the principles of right and wrong. But, on the whole, the vast masses for countless centuries thought otherwise. Their full-blooded belief in a literal inferno was as genuine as Dante's. Not that Paolo and Francesca had never done anything right. But sin is sin, and right is right—that was the essential conviction that kept the doctrine of heaven and hell alive—often in grotesque and shocking forms. "There is," once declared Spurgeon the Baptist preacher of England, "a real fire in hell, as truly as you now have a real body—fire exactly like that which we have on earth, except this, that it will not consume though it will torture you. You have seen the asbestos lying in the fire red-hot, but when you take it out, it is unconsumed. So your body will be prepared by God in such a way that it will burn forever without being consumed."

With the burning out of the fires of hell the figure of Satan continues to lose ground. Each year his function in religion becomes more cloudy. Among intelligent people the old view of evil as proceeding from the machinations of an Evil Spirit has already entirely disappeared. The realms of eternal fire are slowly receding into myth. As a horrible prison-house, hell was built by the cruel fears and servile fancies of men during the ages when dungeons of torture were a recognized part of every government, and when I was supposed to be an infinite tyrant with infinite resources of vengeance.

Only a little over a century ago Satan was a genuine reality. It is true that he assumed a thousand different forms, horrible and ludicrous, to suit the changing fancies of the ages. But in all this change the ancient theologies were fitted to support such a conception no matter how grotesque. For the doctrine of his existence was in harmony with the idea traditional in the Church that the outside world of the unbaptized, the unconverted, the heathen, was under the dominion of the Devil, from which the Christian theocracy alone afforded an ark of refuge.

No imaginary being, be it angel or archangel, cherub or seraph, ever occupied as large a place in men's minds as the Devil. For that reason he is the most important fictional character in My biography. A recent book devoted to his history speaks of him as "the horned god of the West." His grim and haunting figure has always reflected the intelligence and morality of his worshippers. But he has become a failure. His presence in modern religion is more of a difficulty than a help. Except in out-of-the-way places there are few "so poor to do him reverence."

At a time when the Devil was still very popular the mediæval theologians were wont to speculate upon all matters of sin, death, and future punishment. In the course of their meditations they evolved the idea of purgatory as an intermediate state of cleansing. Considering what hell meant to the Dark Ages—a place of dragons and horrible monsters, lagoons of burning pitch and flames of fire, dizzy precipices and hot pavements, it can easily be understood that the doctrine of purgatory came in as a merciful thought. Unlike hell it did not call upon men to "abandon hope all ye who enter here."

But how was the release from purgatory to be obtained? Mediæval man found his answer in the power of the militant Church, which claimed a full jurisdiction over souls in purgatory. It became the peculiar prerogative of the Pope to lighten the purgatorial suffering and, if necessary, terminate it. According to this system the Supreme Pontiff has the power to release all the living from the penalties for sin:—as the dispenser of Christ's merits he has the power to empty purgatory.

In the course of time the doctrine of purgatory came to be associated with some of the worst abuses of the Church. The wholesale dispensation of indulgences offered for the relief of the dead began to alarm serious-minded leaders. For one thing, it encouraged among the living loose rules of conduct, particularly when Tetzel could preach that the boldest sinner without contrition or penitence might lift a friend out of purgatory. . . .

Notwithstanding all the love of the Catholics for the purgatorial system as an integral part of My divine plan it is most interesting to record here its utter repudiation by the Protestants. What the Catholics affirm in My Name the Protestants with equal zeal deny! That an indulgence secured the immediate release of a soul in purgatory was an idea vigorously combated by Wyclif who pronounced it simony to take money for masses for the dead. At the time of the English Reformation, Latimer called purgatory "our old ancient pick-purse." With this in mind the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England pronounced the Roman doctrine "a fond thing, vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God." And the Gallican Confession announced it to be "an illusion, proceeding from the same shop from which have sprung monastic vows, pilgrimages, indulgences and all such things whereby men hope to merit forgiveness and salvation."

In measuring the influence of a system of rewards and punishments, it is impossible to escape the disastrous effect such doctrines exerted on the moral disposition of people, making them callous and cruel. The horrible pictures of torment which artists painted on walls and ceilings, which preachers colored with their ferocious rhetoric, which priests presented at the confessional, and mystics agonized over in their cells—were as frightful as the real torments inflicted on heretics. The instruments of torture used in the Middle Ages, the wheel, rack, screws, pincers, were but material copies of the instruments which the fiends were believed to employ upon the damned in hell. The satanic glee of the *auto da fé* was but a human imitation of the tortures inflicted by the devils, who were supposed to execute those cursed by the mandates of divine wrath.

But it is different now. Such vast and profound changes have overtaken the theological thinking of recent years that what was once gruesome doctrine, sincerely believed to be holy truth, no longer excites conviction. Man has burnt his own mind with the fires of his own hell created by his own imagination. It is impossible for the twentieth-century person to enter into the thought and feeling of the Middle Ages. The intellectual climate is different. The one thing that was real was hell. Heaven was a bit vague, but hell was clean-cut and definite. Until man had the courage to doubt its existence, the flames of hell scorched him. Until he threw off its fears, its horrors appalled him.

Long an essential item of religious belief, eternal hell-fire is now dismissed by modern theologians as an outgrown superstition:

> The idea that God, independent of His children, made a pretty place called heaven, and an ugly place called hell, in order that He might put good little people in the one, and push naughty little people off into the other, is the idea of a fool's heaven and a fool's hell;—the facts are much more glorious and awful. There will be just as good a heaven as the Kingdom of God builds, and no better. Likewise there

will be just as bad a hell as God's disloyal sons make, and no worse. No dream can picture the paradise that God may make in this universe with the help of His good children. And the hell that His rebellious sons create is something appalling. Since heaven or hell is simply the shape we give to God's enfolding energies, all of us are unavoidably engaged in constructing the one or the other, and we have been so engaged every moment since our conscious life began.*

*Swain: *What and Where is God?* pp. 94-95, New York, 1921.

BOOK V

EN ROUTE

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THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

MAN's ideas about Me have undergone such vast transformations in the course of civilization that modern theologians, in view of a better understanding of the historical processes, have revised their textbooks by inserting a new chapter entitled "Progressive Revelation." The use of this phrase is meant to convey the idea that at no time in the past did I completely reveal Myself in the plenary manner so poetically supposed by orthodoxy:

> From Sinai to Calvary—was ever a record of progressive revelation more plain or more convincing? The development begins with Jehovah disclosed in a thunder-storm on a desert mountain, and it ends with Christ saying: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth"; it begins with a war-god leading his partisans to victory and it ends with men saying, "God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him"; it begins with a provincial deity loving his tribe and hating its enemies and it ends with the God of the whole earth worshipped by "a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues"; it begins with a God who commands the slaying of the Amalekites, "both man and woman, infant and suckling," and it ends with a Father whose will it is that not "one of these little ones should perish."*

*Fosdick: *Christianity and Progress*, pp. 209–10.

In view of such undeniable facts of progress, theologians find themselves incapable of wrapping their minds in a mantle of complacency. Unsatisfied with ancient forms they are no longer supporting the finality of the old-time creeds. The best of them have overcome the foolish prejudice of their fathers against scientific progress, consequently, they do not hesitate to avail themselves of the more advanced knowledge of the age in which they live. For that reason they are now saying that, whether on the human or divine side, there has been a slow evolutionary development. "The notion that the divine revelations of the eternal truths of the universe ever ceased is utterly false," writes Floyd L. Darrow; and then he hastens to express astonishment on this score: "That God revealed all that is to be known about the origin and development of the universe to infant peoples at the dawn of history is an idea so absurd that we stand amazed at its credence by any in this marvellous age of super-science."*

For countless centuries men had no idea of progress. In their view of the world everything was static. Not until just a few hundred years ago did it dawn upon intelligent people that My universe is under the sway of the great law of Change and that far from being static all things are dynamic. It is just at this point that modern civilization differs so

*Darrow: *Through Science to God*, Introduction, Indianapolis, 1925.

vastly from all the unnumbered ages that have gone before it: whereas men of antiquity stultified themselves in an idealized changelessness, modernity glories in its progressiveness.

Progress is always difficult because it involves the pain of separation. By long association and habit man becomes attached to outworn beliefs. To discard the old, particularly when it is deeply and emotionally associated with the tender memories of an early religious faith, is by no means easy. For that reason religion has been the most conservative force in civilization. It is here that man's changelessness has been apotheosized into immovable attitudes supporting those unalterable formulations called creeds.

With the rise of progressive ideas it was inevitable that the old notions about Me would come into sharp conflict with the newer ones, just as the old immovable astronomy staggered under the terrific blows of the Copernican demonstrations of motion. The task of reordering one's mind in harmony with expanding knowledge is frequently a severe strain. Rather than scrap the old and feeble semi-comprehension of things, many a person has preferred the point of view of that gentleman of the old school who when told that the facts did not support his contention that the earth is flat, replied with much fervor, "So much the worse for the facts!"

But the old order changeth despite the fears and the tears of those who think that any modification of the time-honored beliefs will cause an immediate relapse into moral chaos. The tiny world of the ancients has been outgrown; it lies hopelessly shattered past the possibility of reconstruction. On all sides—in astronomy, in physics, in chemistry, in anthropology—knowledge has poured into man's mind with incredible speed and with mighty volume and amazing significance. So it has come about that scientific thinking has written many new and undreamt-of pages in My biography, particularly since the middle of the nineteenth century. . . .

In his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* Gibbon reports the story of how the pagan folk in Alexandria expected to see the earth go to pieces when the Christians overturned a statue of their god Serapis. That the universe moves along regardless of the defeat of humanity's idols has led the more intelligent members of the race to learn this valuable lesson: that it is much wiser to commit oneself to the progress of historical development and trust that development to harmonize with newer ideas than to be like that fly upon the coach who said, "What a dust have I raised!"

Man has arisen to his present station from humble beginnings, in a world which favored his struggle upward, by not denying it. It is the very genius of life to rise under favorable conditions to ever higher levels. And these levels involve new capacities and properties. For that reason there will yet arise among you men thinkers of greater magnitude whose thoughts will not be your thoughts, nor their methods your methods, nor their ways your ways. They will defy your petty categories and will exceed your formulas. . . . On that day reason and reverence will stand together, and to the litany of their worship the people will say, "Amen!"

A JOURNEY TO THE WEST

Inasmuch as My universe is built upon infinity everything stretches itself out into the vast unknown. All truth—even about the most simple things—runs into the illimitable, far beyond man's comprehension. "Life has many unfathomable secrets," once declared Jean Henri Fabre; and he continued to meditate that "human knowledge will be erased from the world's archives before we know the last word concerning a gnat."

In a very strict sense no Mortal can know everything on any subject—consequently, all his profound investigation reaches, sooner or later, the limits of positive knowledge. Where man's little circle of certainty ends, the great circle of My unknowability begins. Because man quickly reaches the limits of his probing, it does not mean that the unknown ceases to exist, neither does it disprove that in the realm beyond, truth ceases to be truth. The universe is infinite in an infinite number of ways; and even when man reduces everything measurable and ponderable to the lowest irreducibles of the day, still he has not touched the end. "We fare no better in our speculations," once wrote Einstein to his fellow men, "than a fish which should strive to become clear as to what water is."

Man was only born yesterday and he is still parvenu and callow; he is merely a stone's throw away from the ignorant brute. As he progresses he will learn more and more about My universe which I willingly share with him. But in his present state man's knowledge is by no means perfect; consequently, his ability to exercise patience (as progress in scientific research is being made) really constitutes an element of the supreme virtues of trust and confidence in the rationality of the cosmos. . . .

This thought of widening knowledge, wherein man begins to sense Me in the illimitable, is finely told in one of the old literary treasures of China, called *Hsi Yu Chi* (*An Account of the Journey to the West*). In this mediæval book, one of the chief characters of the drama is an ape—wild, cruel and impetuous. Despite his untamable wildness this beast beats his way into human society and takes a human name as a part of a daring, lawless, mental adventure. Having now crossed the borders of the brute world, he begins his process of education, which is painfully slow; nevertheless he seems quickly to have realized from the very outset that man has a deeper possibility than any other animal. Thus, the first stage of development is marked by a gleam of intelligence when he takes as his name the Chinese character "sun." Although stuttering awkwardly and appallingly mishandling the materials at his command he now feels himself in the grip of that spirit of progress from which there is no escaping. . . . Later on, at the next stage of his development when his more spiritual longings begin to quicken, he uses the characters "wu" and "king," meaning "he who ponders the mysterious." At this point he comes to know that the mind of man possesses an inner awareness or at least an inner intimation of another Mind transcending his own little world. Finally, when he becomes resourceful and really quite enlightened he assumes an additional name, "Hsing-che," which means "the practical." It is in this that his practicality consists: he senses the endlessness of the smallest thing. Life is now to him an affair of infinite perspectives and boundless reach. Although originally born of a block of stone, this ape-man (with much of the rock nature still left in him and with no consciousness of the illimitable), finally emerges a sanctified bodhisattva with a heart fixed on infinite values . . . deep calling unto Deep.

Out of this groping toward infinity man has come to experience a certain noble companionship with Me. Despite the petty rationalization of his theology—which at best has been but an awkward symbol—he has instinctively felt, as William James calls it, a "More" than himself, which is operative in the universe, which he can keep in touch with, which is closer than breathing and nearer than hands or feet.

In his effort to realize more of himself (which is the only way he can know more of Me) man has been the victim of a thousand illusions, fallacies, wrong assumptions, half-grasped notions and grotesque speculations. What a host of distorted ideas! Curiously enough, all these things form a part of My biography, for all that I am is wrapped up with all that has been—or ever will be. But when it is seen how often man has resolutely retraced his steps at the end of innumerable blind alleys it can be appreciated that nothing that "lies beyond" him will ever daunt his soul. . . . "Man," writes Paul Valéry, "is the separate animal, the curious living creature that is opposed to all others and rises above all others by his . . . *dreams!*—by the intensity, succession, and diversity of his *dreams!* by their extraordinary effects, which may sometimes even modify his nature, and not his nature only, but that surrounding nature which he tirelessly endeavours to subjugate to his *dreams*. . . . At every instant he is something else than he is. He does not form a *closed system* of needs and gratifications for his needs. From such gratification he derives I do not know what excess of power, which destroys his content. Hardly are his body and his appetites appeased when something stirs within him; it torments him, informs him, commands him, goads him on; it directs him secretly. And that something is the Mind, the Mind armed with all its inexhaustible questions."*

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

Knowing little or nothing about the idea of progress, man—he of the pre-scientific age—long upheld a dogmatic belief in the downward pilgrimage of the universe.

It was a part of his revealed theology.

Adam had sinned. As a concomitant of this original sin, death entered upon the scene of mundane affairs and caused the whole of creation to be dragged down into chaos. What had once been a happy paradise quickly became nothing more than a heap of ruins. In committing his first sin Adam not only spoiled himself but he also frustrated My plans and initiated a stream of cosmical effects which marred the whole of Nature. Under the terrific blast of My curse, the deranged world now limps along "ever manifesting a shattered ideal":

*Valéry: *Variety* (English translation), p. 28 f., New York, 1927.

The reason why nature is such a bewildering jumble—now declaring the glory of God, and then becoming as voiceless as the sphinx; now as gentle as a mother, and then as cruel as a monster; now suggesting the most noble mood, then actually violating every known moral principle—the reason for this bewildering jumble is that nature also is a broken organism. In a low sense, it is an organism still, it is organic as a physical system, and it appeals to the individual. But the world of nature is no longer competent for man as a moral person. God has not withdrawn from the cosmos as its cause, its present force, its life, its beauty; but as a divine revelation, as a word from the Infinite, Moral, Personal Being, the universe has been cast aside. Just as the individual man and the whole race are broken, so the home of man and the race is broken. Consequently the cosmos is to be finally destroyed.*

Had these ideas not been embodied in the sacrosanctity of theological systems they would have been discarded centuries ago. But the Fall theory secured a place for them. As a consequence of this theory men taught themselves to believe that the world is a City of Destruction—a ruined universe whose fair structure was shattered by a bolt of My divine wrath.

According to the original plan the Garden of Eden was heaven itself for humanity. Death or disease, disappointment, pain or tears could have no place there but only an eternal round of ineffable beauty, of luxurious ease, of ample satisfaction, of unruffled ecstasy. But that was all quite suddenly and radically changed. On the day of Adam's perversity everything toppled into the bottomless pit of

*Curtis: *The Christian Faith*, p. 204, New York, 1905.

failure. No sooner had Adam tasted the forbidden fruit, than "nature through all her realms gave signs of woe." The earth was convulsed, and shook from pole to pole. The beams of the sun were clouded, and summer's droughts and winter's snows usurped the place of spring. Then did the animal passions let loose their rage, and death stalked forth in terror. Since that day humanity has wandered among the ruins. . . .

Who was chiefly responsible for bringing all this about—that is, who made Adam to sin despite the fact that I had created him perfect? It was My old enemy the Devil—the supernatural antagonist—who upset My plans.

This is how it happened. (The story is called in theology *The Revolt of the Angels.*) In creating the heavens and the earth I was supposed to have created an infinite number of spiritual beings, of high minds, noble, sublime, by far more intelligent than man. As bodiless beings these angels had the capacity to assume at will a visible bodily form and thus appear to men. Now it so happened that everything went along smoothly in heaven until one day the most trusted and sublime of all the angels, Lucifer, got it into his head to snatch out of My hands the reins of government. He defied My authority and immediately proceeded to organize a huge army.

War was inevitable. It is said that I immediately entered upon a military campaign to resist Lucifer. Unfortunately the first encounter proved overwhelmingly disastrous to My cause, for Lucifer got Adam on his side and completely outgeneralled Me. Everything was now in terrible consternation; the solar system was disembowelled and reduced to chaos —confusion, darkness, and disorder were in complete control!

In Milton's *Paradise Lost*—a wonderful pen-picture of this awful scene, I am represented as calling a council, including the three Persons of the Trinity and all the great angels, to consider the crushing defeat, and whether any means could be devised by which to recover from it. At the council it was decided that, though the earth is but a speck of dust in comparison with the immeasurable and innumerable constellations of wheeling worlds (and it would really be only an insignificant loss to turn it over completely to Lucifer), still it was a matter of pride to hold on. After much debating, it was finally agreed that recovery from the frightful disaster would have to be brought about by the Second Person of the Trinity. That is to say, I as Infinite God must come down to earth, be born of a woman, be nursed, and cradled as a child, and, growing to manhood, be crucified on the cross, to meet—precisely *how* has never been explained—the demands of My own law that had been broken by Adam.

Despite the expedient of the cross the vast masses of human beings—so it is claimed—are still in a wounded and abnormal condition. Not only the world itself but human nature is in ruins. Just as the material characteristics of Eden were radically changed, so was the human nature of Adam and Eve wrecked. They were cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field. Their nature was utterly perverted. From the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet, in body, mind, and soul, they were alienated from all good, and wholly inclined to evil, they and their posterity to the end of time.

Had the older theologians been content to stop short the doctrine of ruination at this point, the world would have been spared many an ache and many a perversion. But that was not to be the case. Viewing human nature as a mass of wreckage cursed by Me it was inevitable that theological speculations should become rife as to the "inner" secret of this perversity. It is to these speculations that the sex-motif of the Fall stories owes its origin; once considered from this source, the affinity of man for woman no matter how sweet, ennobling and pure came to be regarded as nothing more than love among the ruins.

The strictly aphrodisiac effects of the forbidden fruit was to make both Adam and Eve suddenly conscious of the facts of sex. Ambrose of Milan, appreciating the full significance of this story, boldly taught the sinful nature of the physiological processes of conception and birth; that all human beings are born into sin because they are the creatures of the sexual impulse; that the miraculous birth of Christ was necessary in order to avoid the physical pollutions inherent to normal birth; that woman is punished for the unlawfully acquired knowledge of sex, by subjection to the pangs of childbirth, which, despite its accompanying pain, the deepest instincts of her soul will drive her to desire. In short, original sin is concupiscence; and concupiscence is sexual passion.

From Ambrose this doctrine passed over into the mind of St. Augustine who, in the days of his youth, had already run the whole gamut of sex. From one extreme of a fast and furious life he went the full length of the other. But as self-indulgent as he had been in former days he turned rigorously ascetic. That is why the fruit that had once tasted so good soured into gall and wormwood. (And that, too, is why he could derive no pleasure from his illegitimate son.)

Considering the theological atmosphere of the age and the turbulent personal experiences he went through, it is understandable that to Augustine sex-feeling—of the kind now experienced by fallen man—is intrinsically sinful. Moreover, it follows according to the Augustinian mode of thought that the very act of begetting a child inevitably stains it with "original sin." Sin has its special symbol in the organs of generation and that makes sex a shameful thing. Consequently St. Bernard could speak of man as "nothing else than fetid sperm, a sack of dung, the food of worms. . . . You have never seen a viler dunghill."

That the modern world has moved far beyond this vulgar appraisal is an evidence of My divinity *en route*. Far from being a blighted abortion, a specimen of a once fair and perfect harmony, man is an evolving creature; under the blessing of nature, not under her curse. Coming up from greatly inferior orders of being, man was never so much of a man as he is to-day—a potentiality in giant infancy.

That the world is something more than the dilapidated architecture of a once perfect cosmos smitten down and crumbled by My wrath is becoming the living faith of minds not poisoned by dogmatism. In fact, it is nowadays considered blasphemous even in orthodox circles to suggest that a supernatural antagonist could so outwit Me as to frustrate My plans. To assume—as the great creeds of the Church assumed—that I did not succeed at the outset would be in effect to overshadow Me by a power greater than Myself and at variance with My purposes for good.

In one of his strong evangelical sermons the Reverend Mr. Dwight Moody once said that "This world is a wreck bound to sink; the best that can be done is to get off as many of her passengers and crew as possible, and let her go." Such was the whining tone of the old theology. In a spirit far more redolent of genuine piety Alfred Tennyson declared:

"This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time
To learn its limbs. There is a hand that guides."

And as for sex this much can be said: it is no longer love among the ruins. The whole point of view has been changed. Here, for example, is a modern theologian's manner of evaluating the doctrinal teaching of former generations touching this problem:

> The best men distorted the religion of the very Master from whom they yet had learnt so much; and, as the patristic theologians were also celibates, they added an element of nasty-mindedness which tended to regard Original Sin as equivalent to physical love between man and woman. That repressed sex-complex is another of the almost universal obsessions of the Dark and Middle Ages; and it is still dominant over a large part of Christendom today. It has been a prime agent in the poisoning of theological thought, and the ideas which cause it are a blasphemy against the Creator.*

*From an article entitled "The Sin Obsession," by Rev. Dr. Percy Dearmer, in *God in the Modern World*, p. 182, New York, 1929.

En route!—nothing walks with aimless feet. Life is heliotropic—orienting itself to light. In the same sense it is theotropic, orienting itself to the divine.

THEY MADE THEMSELVES MISERABLE

Once they had convinced themselves that the world is a heap of ruins, men began to compose lugubrious lullabies. . . . In a vale of tears and sorrows, harps are hung upon the willows.

Throughout the long stretch of centuries comprising the mediæval period the emphasis of theological teaching was in the direction of making men miserable in My Name. They were to shun temporal benefits and all enjoyment, mortify the flesh, renounce society, and flee the world. Such was considered the holy ideal most pleasing in My sight. "The greatness of man is truly great in so far as he knows himself to be miserable."

On the soil of India asceticism has had a long career, establishing itself in bodily privations, self-inflicted hardships and horrible sufferings. The more they tortured themselves the more spiritual they felt —at least, so they imagined. The repression of the body with all its appetites, passions, and even its imperative needs, and the infliction upon it of every kind of hardship, was not only an expression of contempt for the flesh but a means of reducing the "not-self" to the verge of non-existence. Such maltreatment produced abnormal psychical states which were believed to be a sure means of obtaining supernatural knowledge. To induce these trance states various methods have been employed: sitting immobile in certain postures, piercing the flesh with pins or irons, irregular breathing. Many of these ideas were subsequently systematized into Yoga practices.

While men were laboring hard to make themselves miserable in the far East, their fellow creatures in the West were equally zealous in carrying out the ascetic ideal. In writing to the virgin Eustochium that famous patristic theologian, St. Jerome, spoke about his struggles for abstinence—a fair example of a holy insistence on tears and a holy incitement to gloom:

> Oh, how many times when in the desert, in that vast solitude which, burnt up by the heat of the sun, offers but a horrible dwelling to monks, I imagined myself among the delights of Rome! I was alone, for my soul was full of bitterness. My limbs were covered by a wretched sack, and my skin was as black as an Ethiopian's. Every day I wept and groaned, and if I was unwillingly overcome by sleep, my lean body lay on the bare earth. I say nothing of my food and drink, for in the desert even invalids have no drink but cold water, and cooked food is regarded as a luxury. Well, I, who out of fear of hell had condemned myself to this prison, companion of scorpions and wild beasts, often seemed in imagination among bands of girls. My face was pale with fasting and my mind within my frigid body was burning with desire; the fires of lust would still flare up in

> a body that already seemed to be dead. Then, deprived of all help, I threw myself at the feet of Jesus, washing them with my tears and drying them with my hair, subjugating my rebellious flesh by long fasts. I remember that more than once I passed the night uttering cries and striking my breast until God sent me peace.*

The dawn of the ascetic movement in the dark days of the fourth century brought about a general tendency to regard the world as inherently evil and spiritually meaningless: a snare of the devil to be avoided, and a vale of tears to be endured until death released the body from all material chains. St. Augustine, who could never throw off his disgust with mundane affairs, set the stamp of his authority upon the vileness of the world as a *massa perditionis,* mere fuel for an ultimate burning.

It was during this age of Augustine that Christendom was full of anchorites. Men forsook the cities and fled to the deserts, there to pass solitary lives in caves or huts, vying with one another in eager rivalry of self-mortification or developing amazing extravagances of self-torture. Because all natural affections were considered inherently sinful only to be rooted out, these men renounced their families, their wives and their children. It was sinful for parents to have children. It was a sin to please yourself, or to please others; for by adopting either course you were sure to displease Me. All pleasures, therefore, however

*Ep. XXII: 37.

slight in themselves or however lawful they might appear, must be carefully avoided.

The rapid rise and spread of the anchorite movement was not a mere wish to escape from all effort or responsibility into some kind of an exalted vacuity. It was more than that. Men felt that they must escape the contamination of the world and save their souls. That such an idea was admirably adapted to enhance neurotic tendencies may be gathered from the gruesome accounts that have come down through the ages. So overpowering was this desire to make themselves miserable that many men followed the practice of the great theologian Origen and straightway became eunuchs "for the kingdom of heaven's sake."

It was out of this same storehouse of misguided ideas, half-hysterical and half-mad, that St. Simeon Stylites drew his asceticism and weird practices. He was the first of those curious anchorites—subsequently called *Stylites*—who lived on the summits of pillars. Before he began living on a pillar Simeon went through a succession of self-imposed austerities. For one whole summer he lived in a garden of weeds, buried in the ground up to his neck. Then he spent some time in a dark cave, with a spiked girdle round his waist. It was in the year 423 that he built his first pillar. Here he lived for a time, attracting the admiration of large crowds. Later on, he moved to a higher pillar in order to be closer to Me and farther away from the world. After a time, he felt the need of perching still higher, until he had succeeded in raising himself forty cubits above the earth. There he spent thirty years, working himself up into a wild fervor in a useless and misanthropic existence.

Filthiness and uncleanliness were also considered holy methods of adding glory to My Name and misery to men. Moved by the idea that the abasement of man is pleasing in My sight, St. Thomas à Becket wore a hair shirt teeming with vermin. Because he believed that cleanliness betokens pride and filthiness humility Alphonso de Liguori lived behind a staircase in a wretched room where he sprinkled his food with bitter herbs, making it so repulsive that cats could not endure the stench.

After centuries of such long and bitter misguidance it is good to record in these pages a new temper toward the world and all things in it. People are now beginning to know that there is nothing to justify the futile martyrdom of an Indian fakir or a Christian anchorite. At no time have I ever requested men to make themselves miserable. Moreover, there is not one single particle of reason anywhere on earth that could support the belief that I am not in perfect harmony with song, with gladness and with joy.

Once, however, it is understood that the world is *en route,* people will see that religion means glow, not gloom. "No deity," declared the immortal Spinoza, "is pleased by my want of power or inconvenience, nor counts as virtuous our tears, sobs, fears, and other signs of weakness; on the contrary, the more we enjoy, the more we pass to a greater perfection, that is, the more we necessarily participate in the divine nature."*

Happiness wants cultivation. Before men knew that My universe is dynamic their theology led them into the depths of wretchedness and despair. That it is virtuous to be sad, that austerities, flagellations, stigmata and all such madness are pleasing to Me is a doctrine that no religion of the future will teach. Religion, instead of being practised as something predominantly sad, will be used as something whose "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

The dawn of that new day is still *en route.* When it arrives men will no longer speak of themselves as *worms of the dust*—they will call themselves *Les Jongleurs de Dieu.* Together they will chant:

"We are but fellow-travellers
Along life's dusty way;
If any man can play the pipes,
In God's name, let him play."

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*Quoted from the fourth chapter of Spinoza's *Ethics.*

SCIENTIFIC DEVOTION

It is to scientific devotion more than to any other cause that man owes his present position on a new earth and under new heavens. Nothing else has so immeasurably enlarged his conception. Everywhere his experiments have opened up the stretches of infinity.

No devotee of many-limbed Vishnu, no worshipper before the ancient Yahweh shrine, no consecrated monk of the Middle Ages ever sought My revelations as eagerly as those who have made the laboratory their sanctuary. Caring nothing for dogmas, assuming nothing, but subjecting the material at hand to remorseless probings, they have succeeded in spite of dungeon, wheel and stake.

Personified Science might indeed be proud to have begun so humbly and to have achieved so much. By the use of her method men have weighed the planets as in scales, they have read the secrets of the animal and vegetable world. More. They have discovered "what is in man," not wholly, but in some large and wonderful degree. Instead of the burnt-out lamp of dogmatism Science has given to humanity "the light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." In an effort to minimize drudgery and misery her great discoveries have attained to concrete availability in useful arts that have remade the world and increased immeasurably the comfort of men and their joy:

> Every field which science has surveyed has opened out into amazing wonders and beauties beyond all powers of perception or imagination. The human body, so wonderfully and fearfully made; the atom with its swirling protons and electrons; electrical forces, playing about all the world and carrying messages into the walled retreats of man; tremendous energies within the smallest grain of sand or drop of water—all these as disclosed to boys in school set the frame and action of a universe so vast and so full of order and beauty that a new type of contemplation and reverence arises. When these things are more commonly known and appreciated, who can doubt that they will inspire new poetry, art, and piety?*

Man will never cease to marvel at the profundities of nature. But the new adoration will as vastly transcend the old as boulevards and steel bridges are superior to mud roads and dangerous fords. As the newer faith and trust burst the old wine-skins of sacrosanct custom, as men begin to scrap their old and feeble semi-comprehension of things, a new sense of the piquancy of being is gained. When men get used to it, it will be vastly more inspiring.

Already men are beginning to value undistorted observation in an effort to eliminate presuppositions. The chief glory of scientific devotion and the chief source of scientific discovery has been the singularly humble and patient manner in which investigators

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*Ames: *Religion*, pp. 79–80, New York, 1929.

have been content to follow wherever evidence might lead. How different from the old theological method! There is, for example, the story of a group of priests who tried to find out the number of a horse's teeth. After the pedants had made various unsuccessful appeals to the ancient authorities such as Aristotle and the Church Fathers an eager young fellow actually proposed looking in the mouth of a horse. Nothing could have been more heretical! His suggestion was fiercely resented. "Satan," they said, "hath tempted this bold neophyte to declare unholy and unheard-of ways of finding truth, contrary to all the teachings of the Fathers." The disputants finally ruled the number of a horse's teeth to be an everlasting mystery, "because of a grievous dearth of historical and theological evidence thereof," and so ordered the same writ down.

While the Ptolemaic doctrine was still in force, it was taken as the ground-work of all astronomical theory that the heavenly bodies revolve in a crystal sphere around the central Earth. But as observation detected more and more minor apparent motions of the stars, which were incompatible with that doctrine in its simplicity, the exponents embroidered the one great circle with an ever-increasing number of minor cycles and epicycles, till confusion became worse and worse confounded. Then dawned the day of Copernican astronomy. It was revealed that the fundamental doctrine of the older system was fallacious. A sublime new conception supplanted the old, and astronomy made the longest single stride it has ever made away from fiction toward truth.

What was the main error of the epicycle-makers? They tried to patch an ancient fiction instead of straightway asking themselves whether, after all, its basis was laid in truth. They tinkered, instead of re-creating. It might have been argued that a doctrine so widely, so persistently maintained as the Ptolemaic theory must in fact have its roots in truth; that it could not have prevailed so largely unless it satisfied some want of the human mind; that it could not satisfy such want unless fundamentally it was true. Doubtless it was so argued; and doubtless such argument further prolonged its life.

Many of the fundamental truths of theological doctrine have been no more correct than Ptolemaic assumptions. Facts yielded by science, criticism and philosophy—and most of all by modern common sense—turned up in multitudinous array to invalidate the mediæval conceptions. While the more courageous thinkers accepted the facts and boldly refrained from weaving any epicycles the vast majority have continued to spend their time in nothing else than making cycles and epicycles, faster and faster still, in ever-accelerating haste to overtake the facts and thereby save the old doctrines.

In spite of all patchwork, scientific devotion has broadened the horizon of man at every step. In the course of time humanity must leave the shrines of its cherished idols behind and push steadily on! . . . Sensing the poetic nature of this truth, James Russell Lowell spoke in verse to those of his fellow men who could understand:

> "New times demand new measures and new men;
> The world advances, and in time outgrows
> The laws which in our fathers' times were best;
> And, doubtless, after us, some purer scheme
> Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,
> Made wiser by the steady growth of truth."

WAR

The earliest Hebrew literature of which the Old Testament affords any indication appears to have been a collection of primitive lyrics, known as the *Book of the Wars of Yahweh.* Presumably it was an anthology of battle pieces celebrating My exploits as Yahweh—the Man of War.

As the wars of the nations of antiquity were essentially wars between the gods of the nations, it was to the advantage of the ancient Israelites that they conceive My relationship with them in terms of a covenant, which meant that, if they kept their side of the contract I would always side with them in battle—just as Chemosh would with Moab. If the clans returned victorious they were sure that I—Yahweh of War—had helped them. If they happened to suffer defeat they were equally sure that it was My wish to teach them a heavy lesson for some supposed infraction of the covenant. Even when the Hebrews were fighting among themselves the bloodiest kind of internecine battles the victors did not hesitate to drag Me in. Here, for example, is one short account of My war activities taken from the *Book of Chronicles:*

> Then the men of Judah gave a shout; and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. And the children of Israel fled before Judah; and God delivered them into their hand. And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter; so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men. Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed because they relied upon the Lord, the God of their fathers.*

Among the Assyrians matters were even worse. Under the name of Assur they worshipped Me as the supreme deity of their pantheon, the chief god of the Assyrian empire. In that capacity I marched at the head of their armies as they travelled about the orient carrying destruction and terror all over western Asia even as far as Egypt. No Assyrian ever thought of disassociating Me from the cruelty and bloodshed which accompanied the ruthlessness of their military forces. It would be no exaggeration to say that about one-half of the cuneiform inscriptions of the ancient Assyrians are devoted to statements like the following from Tiglath Pileser I, who ruled about 1150 B. C.:

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*II Chronicles 13: 15–19.

> In the service of my lord Assur, my chariots and warriors I assembled. I set out on my march. The exceeding fear of the power of Assur, my lord, overwhelmed them. . . . At this time, in exalted reverence of Assur, my lord,—there being found no equal to me in war and no second in battle, to the countries of the powerful kings who dwelt upon the upper ocean . . . the lord Assur having urged me, I went.

From this same section of the world, centuries later, there came the notion of the *Jihad,* the holy war of Islam. Other religions have had their ideas about waging battles in My Name but few have ever given war such an enviable theological support. The Moslems called themselves *Ghazis*—that is, noble warriors of the true religion which is Islam. Christians are called *Kiafirs,* which means *infidels,* because they wickedly adhere to base error. When Moslems plunder Christians it is altogether right and just. When Moslems die in battle they are "martyred"; Christians are only "slaughtered."

In the earliest period of Islam it was forbidden to Mohammedans to take measures against the unbelieving inhabitants of Mecca. But this act of tolerance was soon changed. For in the Koran an announcement was placed in My mouth, declaring that in the future Mohammedans should be permitted to fight and in doing so could count on My support. "I am commanded to fight against men," declared the Prophet, "until they bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and that Mohammed is God's messenger; only by pronouncing these words can they make their property and blood secure from me."

Originally, Christianity started out as a peace movement. Until the first quarter of the fourth century—that is, until the time of Constantine—there was but one opinion among Christians regarding war. Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian boldly declared that "the military oath and the baptismal vow are inconsistent with each other, the one being the sign of Christ, the other of the devil."

From the moment Constantine took over the Church the spirit of war contaminated the lofty principles of faith. Very quickly ecclesiastical organizations were made partners with empires and monarchies. Governments being largely maintained by force, the churches became in general supporters of the military régimes. Except for a few voices crying in the wilderness, Europe, for a period of fifteen hundred years, was devoid of conscience relative to the crime of war.

With the rise of the crusading spirit Christians called upon Me to help them in forcing their own ideas of worship upon non-Christians. ("The Church forgot that Christ had commanded Peter to put up his sword and healed the wound it had made.") For two hundred years the Crusades were fought in My Name, bleeding Europe white and devastating the near East. It is true the Church conceived the plan of the "Truce of God," which discouraged private wars and sought to prevent fighting on holy days. But it was an exceedingly feeble restraint. It was no more effective in stopping bloodshed among Christians than was Isaiah's vision of world peace in keeping the Jews from being slaughtered.

This was natural enough, considering that the popular Christian conception of Me was about like Israel's "God of Battles," a Lord of avenging hosts. Martial attributes were heaped upon Me with glowing fervor, the litanies of the churches abounding in them. Not only was I pictured as the God of war, but the Christian life itself was often represented in terms of bloody battle. (A large part of the older religious literature drew its imagery from the work of soldiers and armies—"the Son of God goes forth to war, a kingly crown to gain.") In this spirit the typical saint goes forth, wearing the mediæval armor. And as he marches he sings the hymn: "Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war."

Never, since man became man, has there been so much talk of peace as within the last decade. The old conception that My divinity can be carried around in ammunition wagons has recently suffered a most severe demolishment. Men nowadays know enough history to see through the ancient and honored hypocrisies. "At no time," writes Emil Ludwig, "has cynicism born of the opportunity to gain, loot, and brawl flourished with more unbridled license than during the Wars of Religion, when both sides inscribed the name of God on their banners."*

War has been so hideous, so cruel, so insane that it is surprising that the churches could have tolerated its glamour so long. It is such an atrocious libel on My nature that it is difficult to realize that large sections of humanity are still blunt to the horror of it all. "You must leave the people through whom you march only their eyes to weep with,"—so counselled Bismarck to his soldiers, despite the fact that the Gospel had said to them: "Ye are My disciples if ye have love one to another."

As long as man keeps civilization *en route* it will slowly bring about his own humanization. He will then see the past covered with blood; he will hear the cries of those who call out from the depths of enforced degradation. He will fully realize the futility of organized conflict on the day that he knows the value of organized co-operation. "It may seem

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*Quoted from an article on "War and Peace" in *Whither Mankind?* p. 163, New York, 1928.

strange," declared Abraham Lincoln in his last Inaugural, "that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces. . . ."

Once freed from primitive terrors and ancient superstitions, theology will no longer call Me the "God of Battles." On that day each man shall sit under his own vine and fig-tree and none shall make him afraid.

UTOPIA

Throughout the theological thought of the ages there have run two diametrically opposed ideas regarding the nature of man's world and My function in it. On the one side there has been the Apocalyptic thought which despaired of earthly justice and happiness. According to this mode of thinking the universe is a wreck bound to sink; there is no use trying to save and reorganize society; the only necessary thing—as the Reverend Mr. Moody pointed out—is to get as many of the passengers off as possible and let the wicked world sink.

Prophecy, on the other hand, has always differed from Apocalypse in that it did not despair. While throwing the great day forward into a more or less vague future it never divorced heaven from earth, though it regarded both as in need of remaking. Prophecy points to Superman who, when he comes along, will wipe out the stupidities and errors of his ancestors.

Man is forever haunted by something beyond himself. His capacity to shape and re-shape, form and re-form, make and re-make, accounts for all his Utopian thoughts. They embody his high expectations—his ideals; for ideals are the things men judge to be good, and therefore worthy of pursuit. When they do not hang idle in the sky ideals have a power to evoke an impulse to pursue them—for they exercise an attraction:

"All are called to tasks sublime;
All alike must aid to carry
Forward one sublime design."*

What is an ideal? It is not from flesh and blood but from Spirit; it is the infinite within the finite. The whole history of man is an achievement of that which lies *beyond* his immediate range—that is, the realm of infinite values. Because a plan is Utopian it does not mean that it is inherently impossible. Universal peace, while Utopian, is far from being unrealizable, as the events of recent years testify. Man and his science are yet in infancy, and even now new discoveries may any day convert a dream into an actuality.

Dreams! Out of such stuff men are made. Not of course that shadowy unreality terminating in emptiness, but those lofty ideals of ennobling hopes, unsubstantial in form but real and true in essence. They are the bridges across the Impossible, without which few enterprises would be imagined, and none achieved. Does man write a *New Atlantis?* Does he launch a *Mayflower* on wintry seas? Then the highest summits that now beckon him are only foothills to that top and crown on which humanity shall be transfigured. From there on, the endless quest will just begin—"the sun is but a morning star. . . ."

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*Felix Adler.

To some men Utopia is but a thin veneer over the surface of ineluctable fact. Just when facts are assumed to be fixed and monotonous that is the time they begin to perform prodigies and wonders. Carlyle, it is said, sat listening once to the common talk about the ineffectiveness of ideas; then, when a pause came, remarked: "Gentlemen, there was once a man named Rousseau. He wrote a book which was nothing but ideas. People laughed at it. But the skins of those who laughed went to bind the second edition of the book."

As his civilization is psychologically derived, so is man's Utopia—in fact, his civilization is nothing more than Utopia *en route* (which is just another way of saying that, basically, it is an affair of mind in evolution). From the Simple Consciousness of the animal world man has arrived at Self-Consciousness.

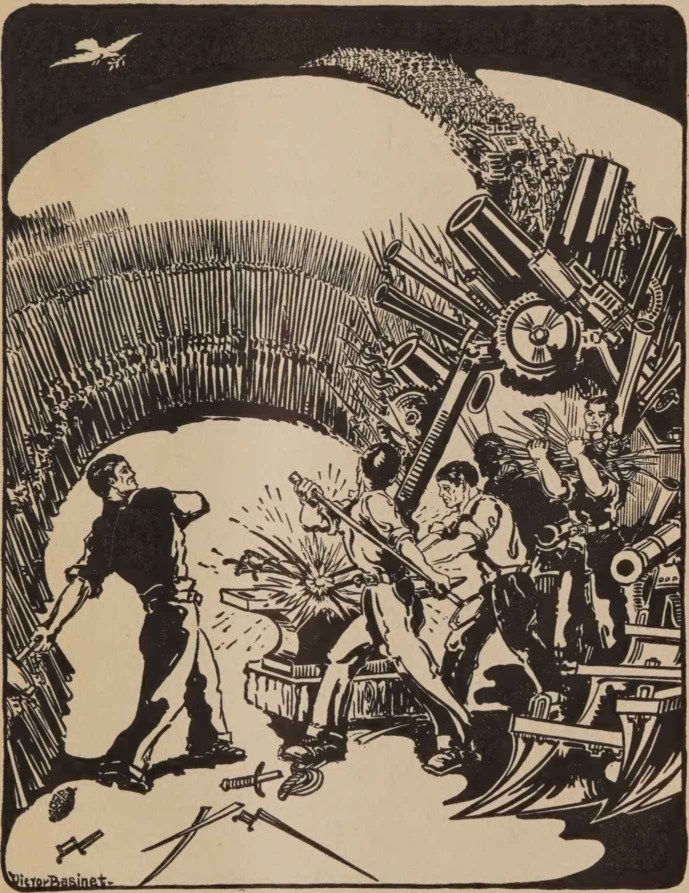
With the deepening of his spirit and the unfolding of his mind he will come into a Cosmic Consciousness in which there will occur a new intellectual enlightenment. Already Dr. Richard M. Bucke, the Canadian psychologist, has given a profound view of this awakening.

The existing consciousness by which contemporary man lives is only the transitory form of another and higher consciousness. A few here and there have already manifested this seership. Some day its possession will be claimed by the entire race. When that occurs Utopia will be a reality. But until then it will remain a dream of celestial pageantry, woven of light and shadow and blue immensity. . . .

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The idea of social progress postulates a world favorable to its realization. This explains why man is in possession of a spirit that cannot cease from striving till the ramparts of heaven have been scaled. . . .

It is one of the surpassing glories of Hebrew expectation that it supplied a commanding name—the Kingdom of God—to represent an inclusive ideal. Such is the language of poetry, deeper than logic. There is a tendency in the human mind to dramatize reality, an inevitable and legitimate tendency which need not be despised or sacrificed to


Victor Basinet

WAR

. . . And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks!

pseudo-rationalist demands. It is this purified and sublimated picture of the total real environment which it is the function of religion to supply:

> Man is a fragment that knows he is a fragment, and by that very knowledge testifies to the hidden presence of a perfect whole. Man sees the chasm between what he is and what he ought to be; but what he ought to be is the reality to which he is pledged in the inmost essence of his being.*

There are some who will smile at My biography because of its unmistakably close organic relationship to humanity. So long have men been schooled in the old conception of absentee divinity that it is difficult to comprehend My immanence.

He who knows the Kingdom in its truest sense already understands that I am seated on no throne folding My hands in statuesque solitude. The Kingdom is the inevitable destiny of mankind made democratically royal by the democratically loyal. Those who have in some measure achieved a Cosmic Consciousness of wide ranging values will bear witness to the spirit of Whitman when the bard of Camden sets forth his sense of companionship—a friendly touching of wings:

> "Swiftly arose and spread around me, the peace and joy and
> knowledge that pass all the art and argument of earth;
> And I know that the hand of God is the elder hand of my
> own,

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*McComb: *God's Meaning in Life*, p. 11, New York, 1917.

And I know that the spirit of God is the eldest brother of
my own,
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers and
the women my sisters and lovers,
And that a kelson of creation is Love."

Before Me is the Scroll of Destiny!

I see the past . . . stained with blood. I hear the cries of those who groan. I behold the vast upward struggle of man, dim, multiform and grotesque. Yonder are the rough blunders, the primeval fears, the smoke of burnt sacrifices, the hideous idols, the bloody wars—the infant's first awkward attempts to walk. It is black night in the past . . .

Before Me is the Scroll of Destiny!

I see the present . . . faint streaks of dawnlight. There is confusion, economic waste, poison-gas, wealth unconsecrated, science immature. Instead of flying with each other men fly at each other. . . .

Before Me is the Scroll of Destiny!

I see the future . . . rosy-fingered morn dawn o'er the hilltops. As dawn breaks, the clouds of ignorance and superstition are dissipated; the mists of violence, hatred, and greed have been lifted; even the dark shadows lurking in the valleys have perceptibly shortened. The full day is not yet here. . . . Patience!—Time like a dome of many colors will yet stain the whole white radiance of eternity. As surely as the night was broken, so surely has man climbed out of the bogs. . . .

Before Me is the Scroll of Destiny!

See! He has already scaled the foot-hills. Not one man alone, or two, or three, but all the nations. Everywhere men and women together are now leading their children forward consecrated to the Kingdom, the ideal: "I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness." It is a glorious day. They come from far and near, from east and west, from north and south; they beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. The trees clap their hands for joy, the mountains skip about in exultation. . . .

I am satisfied. It is day—the day of complete Emancipation.

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